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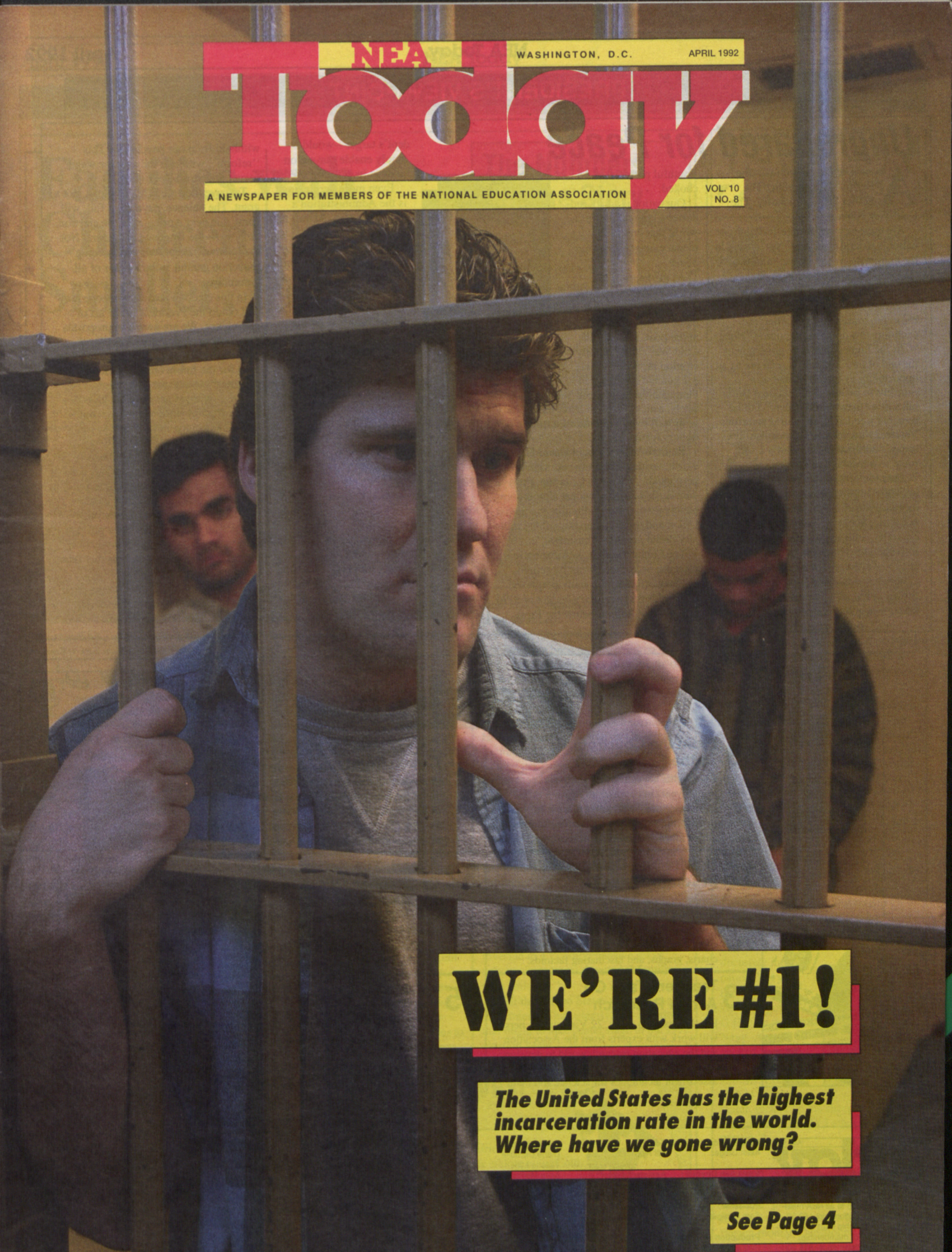

WE'RE #1!

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. Where have we gone wrong?

See Page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Unprepared for Peace

A new world is upon us. The Berlin Wall is a relic. The Soviet Union is history. The Cold War is over.

Are these new realities reflected in our nation's federal priorities? Not one bit. Is the budget the White House submitted to Congress responsive to these changes? Not at all. Do we see evidence that the Bush Administration is prepared to begin the transition from a defense economy to a domestic economy? None.

At the highest levels of government, the end of the Cold war is seen not as an opportunity to be seized, but as a problem to be dodged. President Bush talks of a "new world order," but he remains wedded to old world priorities. Yesterday's international norms rule today's national plans. That's a sure route to a troubled tomorrow.

That tomorrow may have already arrived. Our domestic condition stirs up memories of the Great Depression. We see rising unemployment, stymied productivity, a decaying infrastructure, an imperiled environment, and a declining standard of living for all but the richest Americans. State and local governments drown in red ink. Our public schools struggle against economic strangulation. Youthful potential is choked.

Our nation is adrift, rudderless, unprepared for a world that lacks a Soviet menace, *unprepared for peace*.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

At the heart of the White House budget are defense appropriations equal to those that existed at the peak levels of the Cold War. The Administration proposes a mere 3.2 percent reduction in Pentagon funding, a cut (more accurately, a nick) that will leave the military with well over a quarter of a trillion dollars for fiscal 1993.

Retired Army Colonel David Hackworth, writing in *Newsweek*, says he's perplexed: "As far as I can see, President Bush's defense budget almost completely ignores the reality that the Soviet Union and its long-standing global military threat are out of business."

The Center for Defense Information, a research organization run by retired military officers, is equally perplexed. CDI holds that a military budget of $196 billion—$90 billion below the President's target—would amply enable our nation to meet its military needs.

Even more perplexing is the Administration's long-term plan. At the end of the defense reductions President Bush proposes through 1997, we will still be spending far more than Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter spent when the Soviet bear was on the prowl.

Representative Lee Aspin, the Wisconsin Democrat who heads the House Armed Services Committee, maintains we could double the cuts in the President's plan without any jeopardy to our national security. Former CIA Director William Colby goes further. Colby would slice military spending in half over the next five years.

But the President isn't listening. Presidential candidates aren't listening. Few in Congress are listening.

Election-year gimmickry substitutes for thoughtful fiscal policy. Congress offers a dollar-a-day tax cut. Presidential contenders follow suit. President Bush trumps this trick. He instructs the IRS to reduce the amount of federal income tax withheld from our paychecks. This "reform" will give the average wage earner an extra $6 per week.

Taxpayer beware: This is a loan, not a grant. The balance, payable in full, will come due next April—after the election. To borrow the language of General Norman Schwartzkopf, this withholding reduction gambit is the mother of all gimmicks.

In this election season, someone may still outdo the President in the art of gimmickry. We are awash in proposals that show profound disrespect for the American electorate—and profound disregard for the future our children will inherit.

The American people want an economic strategy designed to meet domestic needs, not penny-ante tax breaks designed to advance presidential ambitions.

Our nation is ailing. The illness is serious. We need strong medicine. But our national leaders—and many who aspire to national leadership—offer us candy-coated placebos. Instead of treating us like adults who welcome the bitter pill that stimulates recovery, they treat us like children who crave the sweets that retard recovery.

To all of this, the American people ought to respond with one forthright statement: This will not stand!

Inside

9 From the Courtroom To the Schoolroom
Civil rights lawyer Morris Dees has spent the last 25 years in courtrooms fighting racial intolerance and hate violence. Now he's ready to bring the same zeal to the schoolroom—with a magazine just for teachers.

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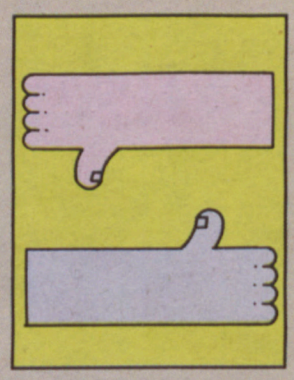
The country's only teacher-centered televison show, "Teacher TV," will begin a 13-week run on April 19. The half-hour shows are co-produced by NEA and the Learning Channel and will air on the Learning Channel.

35 Should We Lengthen The School Year?
Yes, argues a Minnesota media specialist: "We can have 20 percent improvement with 20 percent more time in school." No, says an Oregon teacher: More time in school means less time for individual development.



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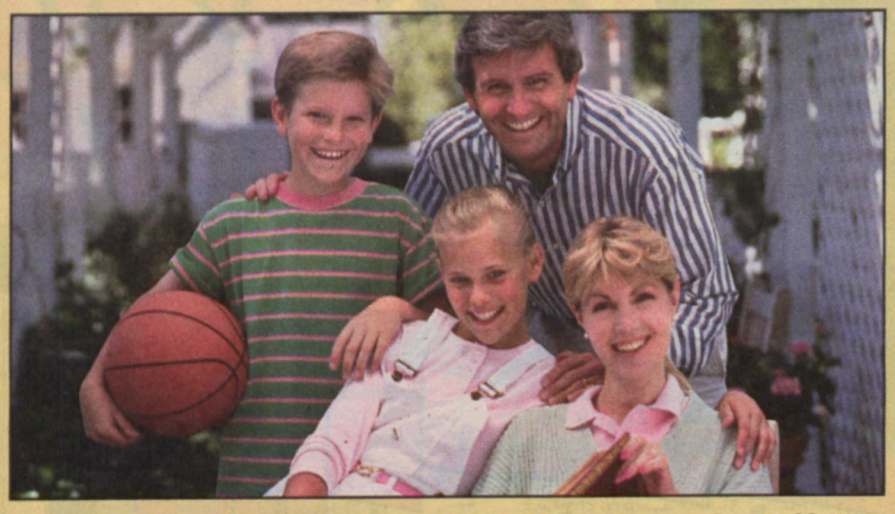
NATIONAL NEWS

Families with Children: Fewer, Smaller, Poorer

New statistics paint a troubling portrait of American families.



This stereotype of the typical American family no longer bears much resemblance to reality and no Americans understand that better than school employees.

The 1980s should have been glory years for the American family.

In the White House, after all, sat two Presidents—first Ronald Reagan, then George Bush—who often expressed their belief in the importance of families and family values.

But new studies are showing that the pro-family rhetoric of the past dozen years, glossed over a troubling reality: Families with children are worse off today than they were in 1980. And parents are losing faith in the American dream.

"For the first time," notes pollster Celinda Lake, "the majority of Americans—62 percent—now worry about whether they'll be able to offer their children the same advantages they had when they were growing up."

The apprehension parents feel today reflects the many different trends that are squeezing families from every angle. The biggest squeeze is economic.

"Between 1980 and 1990, the real median income of families with children fell 5 percent, while the costs of housing, health care, transportation, and education rose," reports Judith Weitz of the Washington, D.C.-based Center for the Study of Social Policy.

But these numbers don't tell the full story. Not only did median family income fall during the 1980s—it fell even though parents were working many more hours.

Two thirds—67 percent—of all mothers of children under 18 worked outside the home in 1991. That total is 10 points higher than the 1980 figure, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Between 1980 and 1991, the percentage of families with both father and mother working outside the home rose 14 points, to 48 percent of all families with children. By 1991, more than half of all mothers with children under age 1 were employed.

One other category of families with children also increased significantly in the 1980s: single-parent families.

In 1991, more than one in four of all families with children—26 percent—included only one parent; in 1980, the figure was one in five.

One-parent households average considerably less income than two-parent households. For that and other reasons, children are now the poorest Americans.

One in seven adults was officially poor in 1990. For children, the ratio was one in five—20.6 percent, an increase of 2.7 million poor children since 1979.

America's school employees may not be able to rattle off these statistics by heart. But they see what these numbers mean each and every school day. Fewer parents have time to spend with their children. Fewer parents have the means to provide their children the home environment and the health care they need to grow up strong.

Perhaps largely for that reason, fewer couples have been having children. In 1973, reports the Census Bureau, six of 10 families had at least one child under age 18. In 1990, less than half of all families did.

Households without children, notes the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, have a median income per person that is 67 percent higher than households with two children.

That may be the most troubling statistic of all—and it can be changed. In Western Europe, after all, families with children don't have to scrape by on far less money than their neighbors without children.

The reason is easily found. As University of Michigan researcher Greg Duncan noted in recent testimony before Congress, Western European countries have invested in a "comprehensive set of universal programs directed at families with children."

Will the United States make that same investment? That, clearly, is a question that ought to take center stage in the 1992 election year.

The Numbers Tell the Story

Real median income of young families with children declined from $23,705 in 1970 (in 1990 dollars) to $16,219 in 1990, a 32 percent decrease.

- Average annual health payments by families amounted to 11.7 percent of average family income in 1991, up from 9 percent of family income in 1980.
- In 1975, 75 percent of jobless Americans received unemployment compensation. In 1991, 42 percent of jobless Americans received unemployment compensation.
- Among married couples with children, 91 percent of those who rent cannot afford a median-priced home in their region.
- In the 1975-76 academic year, the average cost of college education at a four-year public institution was $1,935. In 1989-90, the average cost was $4,979.
- Families now spend $15.5 billion annually on child care.

It's Time To Reinvest In America

The NEA-backed Campaign for New Priorities is now working to shift defense funds saved by the ending of the Cold War into investments in education, health care, and other programs that can strengthen the American economy and American families.

Endorsers of the Campaign range from the National Association of State Boards of Education to the International Association of Machinists—the union that represents most of America's defense industry workers.

To send a message that urges Congress to invest in America, you can call the Campaign's toll-free number, 1-800-92ACTION.

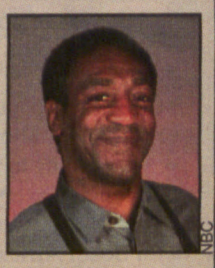
HEROES & ZEROES

The Marie Antoinette Award goes to Meriden, Connecticut, school board member Connie Soboleski. When asked by constituents to apply for government grants for a school breakfast program, Soboleski responded, "It's not our job.... In the first place, kids shouldn't be coming to school hungry." The Meriden board voted not to apply for the funds and, despite protests, refused to reconsider.

Roseville, Minnesota, social studies teacher Duane Dittrich calls his new Mohawk haircut a "tremendous indication of the generosity of this community." Actually, Dittrich's the big-hearted one. He challenged his community to raise money for the Toys for Tots program. When they came up with $1,825, he lived up to his part of the bargain. A little shorter on the sides, please.

Did you know that President Truman ended the Korean war by dropping the atomic bomb on Korea? That General Douglas MacArthur led the 1950s anti-Communist crusade? It's all history—if you believe what you read. Five prominent textbook publishers included 5,200 factual errors in 10 new books up for adoption in Texas—and sale nationwide. The books are being corrected and the publishers fined.

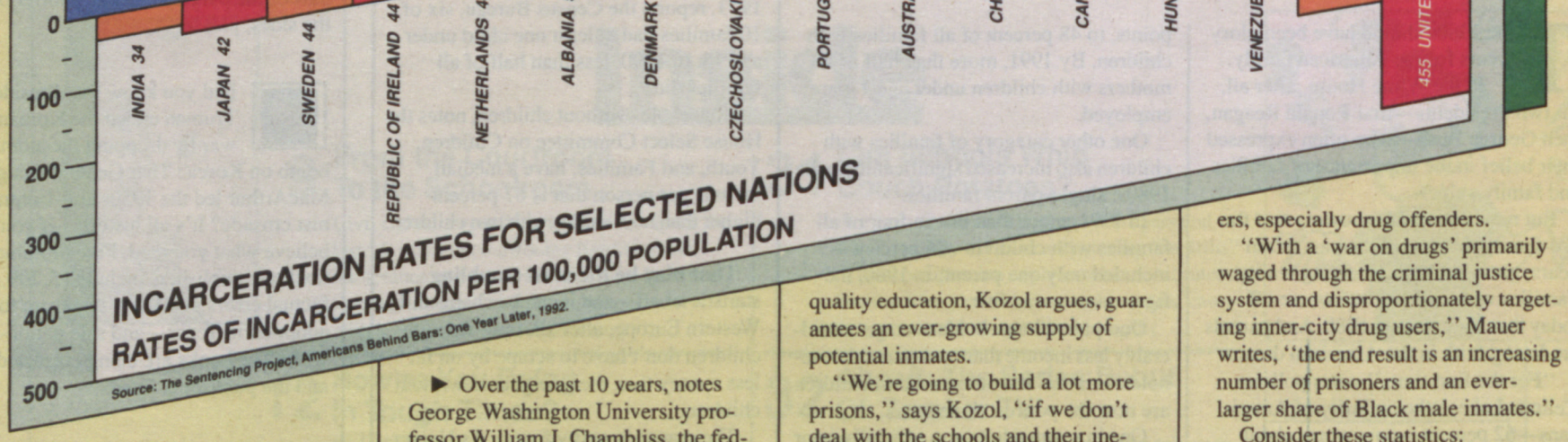
Congratulations to Bill Cosby for making it official—he's a high school graduate. You may know the comedian has a doctorate in education, but you probably didn't know he got a G.E.D. in the Navy. As part of an ABC winter special, *Class Clowns*, Cosby visited his alma mater, picked up his sheepskin, and proclaimed, "NOW I am a successful person."



An unnamed adviser to President Bush's reelection campaign hasn't tumbled to the fact that teachers have a talent for raising money. Questioned about shady characters on a Bush financial committee, the official said: "What are you going to do—get schoolteachers to be your fundraising people?"

COVER STORY

THE EXP



INCARCERATION RATES FOR SELECTED NATIONS
RATES OF INCARCERATION PER 100,000 POPULATION

Source: The Sentencing Project, Americans Behind Bars: One Year Later, 1992.

In 1979, the United States was number 3—behind South Africa and the Soviet Union —in one of the world's most distressing statistics: the proportion of population behind bars.

Today, over a decade later, we stand at number 1. In the 1980s the U.S. prison population doubled and reached 1 million.

According to the most recent figures, out of every 100,000 Americans, 455 are in prison. The comparable rate for South Africa is 311. The Soviet Union's last recorded figure was 268.

Even more shocking is the U.S. incarceration rate for Black males, which stands at 3,370 per 100,000—compared to 455 for all Americans and 681 for Blacks in South Africa.

"We've been locking people up," says Indiana Commissioner of Correction James Aiken, "like no one has ever locked them up before."

Across the nation, in state after state, city after city, the costs of locking people up are crowding out new expenditures for education and other public services.

► Over the past 10 years, notes George Washington University professor William J. Chambliss, the federal government has increased criminal justice spending by 29 percent. During the same period, the federal government has cut education spending by 25 percent (in inflation-adjusted dollars).

► At all levels of government, prison spending is becoming an ever-larger proportion of education spending—helping drive out new spending on the nation's schoolchildren.

► In the mid-1980s, municipalities and counties for the first time ever began spending more of their budgets jailing people than educating them.

A prison costs anywhere from $50,000 to $70,000 per bed to build, and each bed costs $20,000 a year to operate. In contrast, the per-pupil expenditure of one of the nation's best-equipped school districts is $15,000.

Writer and social critic Jonathan Kozol has detailed the unequal education spending of rich and poor school districts in his recent best-seller, *Savage Inequalities*. America's failure to provide all children with access to quality education, Kozol argues, guarantees an ever-growing supply of potential inmates.

"We're going to build a lot more prisons," says Kozol, "if we don't deal with the schools and their inequalities."

Can we do anything about our nation's bars-first-blackboards-later spending priorities?

Critics of prisons, such as the Washington, D.C.-based Sentencing Project, argue that we can.

The sharp rise in the incarceration rate is more a product of government policy than higher crime rates, says Marc Mauer, the Project's assistant director. Mauer attributes rising prison budgets to changes in two policy areas—the get-tough-on-crime laws and the "war on drugs."

The overall crime rate rose only slightly in the 1980s, Mauer contends. What really changed were patterns of policing, prosecuting, and sentencing offenders, especially drug offenders.

Minnesota teacher Dennis Weir

"With a 'war on drugs' primarily waged through the criminal justice system and disproportionately targeting inner-city drug users," Mauer writes, "the end result is an increasing number of prisoners and an ever-larger share of Black male inmates."

Consider these statistics:

► From 1980 to 1989, drug arrests nationwide went from 471,165 to 1,247,763.

► Post-1984 mandatory sentencing laws added from 4,412 to 6,971 prison-years to the federal prison population, at a cost of from $79 to $125 million.

► In 1980 offenders were being sentenced to prison at the rate of 196 per 1,000 arrests. In 1987 the rate was 301 per 1,000 arrests.

► In Florida, prison admissions for drug crimes rose 1,825 percent between 1980 and 1989—while admissions for all crimes increased by only 381 percent.

► Drug offenders now make up 53 percent of the federal inmate population. By 1995, they're expected to constitute 69 percent.

The implication: it's not so hard to reduce incarceration rates. Just change the policies that put people in prison.

Could we do that? On this question policy makers and experts can and do differ.

PRISON EXPLOSION

In the '80s, U.S. prison populations doubled. Prisons became the fastest-growing item in state budgets. For every new prison bed we establish, we could put four kids through a year in the best-equipped school district in the country.

Indiana's Commissioner Aiken does not believe the people in Indiana prisons could be handled somewhere else.

"The first-time nonviolent offender is not in our prisons," Aiken maintains. "Most of the people in Indiana prisons are repeat offenders; 91 percent of our maximum security offenders have either killed or caused serious bodily injury or rape. Their average sentence is 40 years.

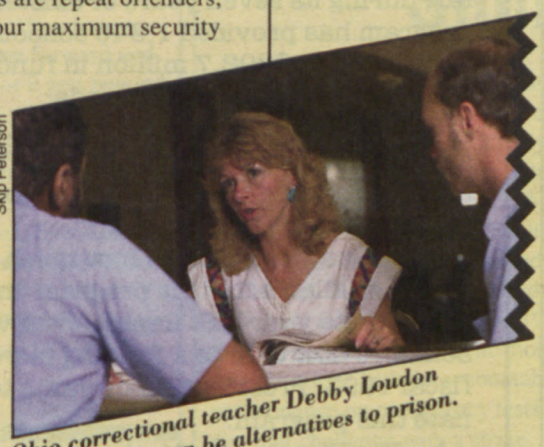
"The crime problem is real," he says. "People are in prison as result of their own actions, not government policy," Aiken concludes.

On the other hand, the Sentencing Project notes that nationwide "over half of those sentenced to prison have been convicted of nonviolent crimes."

The Project recommends using more alternatives within the correctional system and redefining drug abuse as a public health, not a criminal, matter.

Two NEA members who teach in prisons have somewhat similar views on correctional alternatives. Debby Loudon, a resource teacher at the Ohio Corrections Training Academy in Orient, says some of the prisoners there would respond to a different form of control.

Dennis Weir, a teacher and local Association president at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Stillwater, agrees: "We need to reexamine the population. We need to see who really needs to be here."



Skip Peterson

Ohio correctional teacher Debby Loudon believes there can be alternatives to prison.

After that examination, suggests Weir, "we could see who could be here for shorter time, and who could be treated with noninstitutional options—house arrest, electronic 'wristband' control, or telephone monitoring."

The Bush Administration takes a different—and simpler—approach: build more prisons.

"In the '80s we did about half the job we had to do [by passing new federal crime laws and nearly tripling federal prison capacity]," U.S. Attorney General William Barr recently told PBS's Robert MacNeil. "And I think in the '90s we have to do the other half of the job: and that's going to require states to build prisons."

Elsewhere in the world, interestingly, even conservative governments are reducing their prison populations. Great Britain and the apartheid government of South Africa have recently decided that incarceration is not cost-effective. Britain expects to reduce prison population by up to 50 percent by 1995.

In this election year, will America's world leadership in incarceration become an issue?

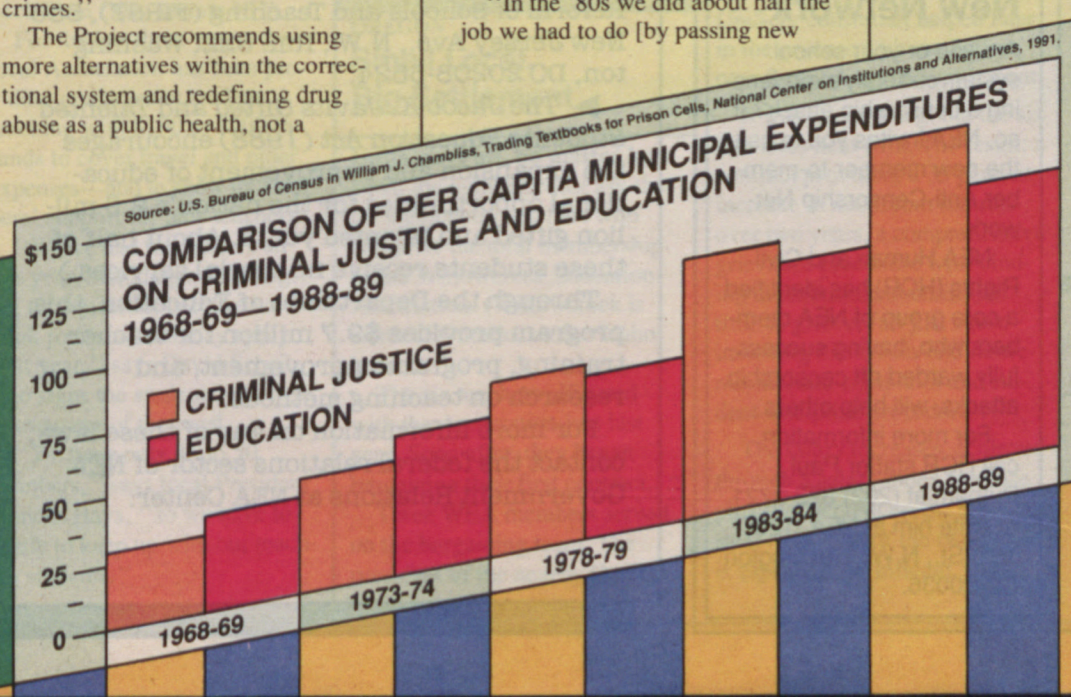
The Sentencing Project's Marc Mauer has long sought a national debate that contrasts the "anticipated benefits of various policies—prison construction vs. Head Start, mandatory sentencing vs. national health care."

Such a debate, Indiana Correction Commissioner Aiken believes, could help convince the American people that "we can't build our way out of this dilemma—[can't] use prisons to resolve the social issues we're faced with."

Will we get a prisons debate in 1992? A Massachusetts federal judge, David Mazzone, is not optimistic.

"As long as there's leadership that won't convey a vision for education and spends more money on putting people behind bars," says Judge Mazzone, "we're shoveling sand against the tide."

—Nancy R. Needham



'Just Count the At-Risk Third Graders'

When Indiana Commissioner of Correction James Aiken (right) set out to project the Indiana prison population 10 years from now, he didn't need a fancy formula. Aiken just asked for a count of today's eight-year-olds who are living in poverty, or have been involved in abuse, or are from broken or dysfunctional homes.

"There's a link between children and early education and the criminal justice system," says Aiken. "The same indicators of trouble you find at the beginning of childhood are there at the end—when we get them.

"If no interventions are made," Aiken continues, "the prisons will end up with a predictable fraction of the at-risk population of schoolchildren."

Which is why Aiken holds to a "pay now or you'll pay me later" approach to allocating government resources. "People come to prison," he says, "because we aren't providing those entrusted with children at the early end with the resources necessary to make a visible impact on the rate of intake into the criminal justice system.

"You look at an individual prisoner and say, 'Why wasn't someone given the resources to teach this one to read? Wasn't it cheaper to do it then?'"

—N.R.N.

HUMAN RIGHTS

War on the 'Wizards'

In Milpitas, near San Jose, California, both teachers and students love the spelling game 'Wizards.' So when a parent labeled it 'Satanic' and called for it to be permanently banned, the local Association fought back—in court.

Jose Villegas

Milpitas, California, teachers Margo Ragano, left, and Deborah Hullings believe there's no educational reason to ban a spelling game called Wizards.

"They tell me I'm an exemplary teacher, and yet I can't judge what material is appropriate for my classes," says Margo Ragano, a teacher of gifted and talented students in Milpitas.

Fully 75 percent of her fourth and fifth grade students who used the spelling game Wizards were scoring 100 percent on spelling tests. Then the school board banned the game.

The reason? Parents John and Stephanie Newbrough complained about their son playing the game in Deborah Hullings' class. The Newbroughs called Wizards "a religious indoctrination into Satanism." Instead of following existing curriculum review procedures, the principal told teachers to stop using the game.

After a teacher filed a grievance, the Newbroughs wrote a letter of complaint about the game. In response, the school superintendent formed a committee to examine Wizards.

The committee's one-sentence verdict: "While we abhor censorship, the committee members cannot support the use of Wizards in its current form because of the terms and symbols used in it."

Needless to say, Milpitas teachers don't agree. They say Wizards, which had been used for 4th-6th graders in virtually every elementary school in the district, simply uses kids' imaginations to make spelling fun.

In playing the game, students travel through a fantasy land to reach the Enchanted Castle. They collect travel dots for words spelled correctly, and along the way they encounter evil giants, gargoyles, and dragons. Since students work together, they build social as well as spelling skills.

"My students loved the game so much," says Weller Elementary School teacher Deborah Hullings, "that I'd use it as a behavior management tool: If you want to play Wizards later today, you have to quiet down right now." Her students would also use the game's fantasy themes for other writing and reading assignments.

Like other teachers, Hullings is upset with the district's ruling. "They didn't give a valid educational reason for pulling the curriculum."

Colleague Margo Ragano says she doesn't mind giving a student an alternate assignment when a parent requests it. "But I don't like one parent telling me to remove materials for all students."

To fight the district's ruling, the Association of Milpitas Educators, led by President Bill Farmer, went to court. AME filed a lawsuit charging the district with violating state laws that protect teachers from arbitrary and capricious restrictions when selecting instructional materials.

The lawsuit also alleges that the school board's decision furthers fundamentalist Christian religious beliefs and "supports the establishment of religion in the district."

The California Teachers Association joined the local Association and teachers Deborah Hullings, Diane Tiessen, and Margo Ragano in filing the suit and will pay the local's legal costs. Currently, the judge is reviewing the facts of the case.

Meanwhile Milpitas educators are working with the school board on a new policy to handle similar problems in the future.

"Just because we've disagreed once," says Association President Farmer, "doesn't mean we have to be disagreeable."

—Melissa Etlin
NEA Human and Civil Rights

NEA Creates New Network

Are you or your school system currently experiencing a censorship attack? If so, NEA invites you to use the new member-to-member Anti-Censorship Network.

NEA Human and Civil Rights (HCR) has identified a core group of NEA members who, having successfully warded off censorship attacks, will help others.

For more information, call HCR staffer Paul Putnam at (202) 822-7721, or write him at NEA, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington DC 20036.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Four Laws Your School Can Use

Every year, dozens of federal laws get passed and dozens of programs get funded with little fanfare. But the attentive Washington Watcher knows these programs can make a big difference on the homefront.

Here are a few that may be helpful in your own school:

▶ *The Gun-Free School Zones Act (1990)* makes it a federal offense to discharge any gun or carry an unauthorized firearm within 1,000 feet of a school.

In February, a man who fired a gun at random at a football game near a school in Texas, became the first person to be sent to prison under the Gun-Free School Zones Act.

This legislation could be another much-needed deterrent to school violence if students—and everyone else—get the word that they can be prosecuted for carrying guns in or near schools. NEA suggests that local Associations work with their districts and police departments to publicize this law.

▶ *The Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act (1984)* provides financial assistance for the removal of cancer-causing asbestos. So far, during its seven years of existence, this program has provided 1,940 schools in 1,125 districts with $292.7 million in funds for the elimination of asbestos hazards.

Unfortunately, only 15.5 percent of all schools that request money get it. That's because funding has been limited to an average of about $50 million per year.

Since Congress decides how much money will be available for this program on a yearly basis, write your U.S. Representatives and Senators now to urge a funding increase for fiscal 1993. President Bush wants to eliminate this program.

▶ *The Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Act (1988)* provides $240 million in basic grants to state education agencies for math and science instruction.

Plus, the program provides grant money ($16 million in fiscal 1992) to elementary and secondary teachers for programs they propose. For more information, write Allen Schmieder, Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching (FIRST), 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Rm. 522, Washington, DC 20208-5524.

▶ *The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act (1988)* encourages the expansion and improvement of educational opportunities for the nation's 2.5 million gifted and talented youth. About half of these students receive no special services.)

Through the Department of Education, this program provides $9.7 million for teacher training, program improvement, and research on teaching methods.

For more information on any of these laws, contact the federal relations sector of NEA Government Relations at NEA Center.

Local Look

WISCONSIN

Don't Get Mad—Get Training

You're tired of dealing with kids who won't listen, frustrated with apathetic parents, and sick of handling useless paperwork just to make your principal happy. When anger's building, what do you do?

Teachers in the Janesville-Beloit area have a new alternative to pulling their hair out—they can get training to help them handle what they can't control.

"Teacher Anger Workshops" are the brainchild of Janesville Education Association President Colleen Neumann and UniServ Director Lysabeth Wilson. Led by a psychologist, the sessions teach members how to avoid blowing up by suggesting new ways to cool down, express anger constructively, and resolve conflicts.

"We're all under stress," says Newmann, a middle school Spanish teacher. "You have to be willing to come forward and seek a little help or it gets beyond you."

The workshops, offered free to the 1,750 teachers who belong to seven area locals, are jointly funded by six area school districts and the Association. Next year's funding will be supplemented by a $3,000 NEA Policy and Practice Urban Grant award.

KANSAS

Pat on the Back

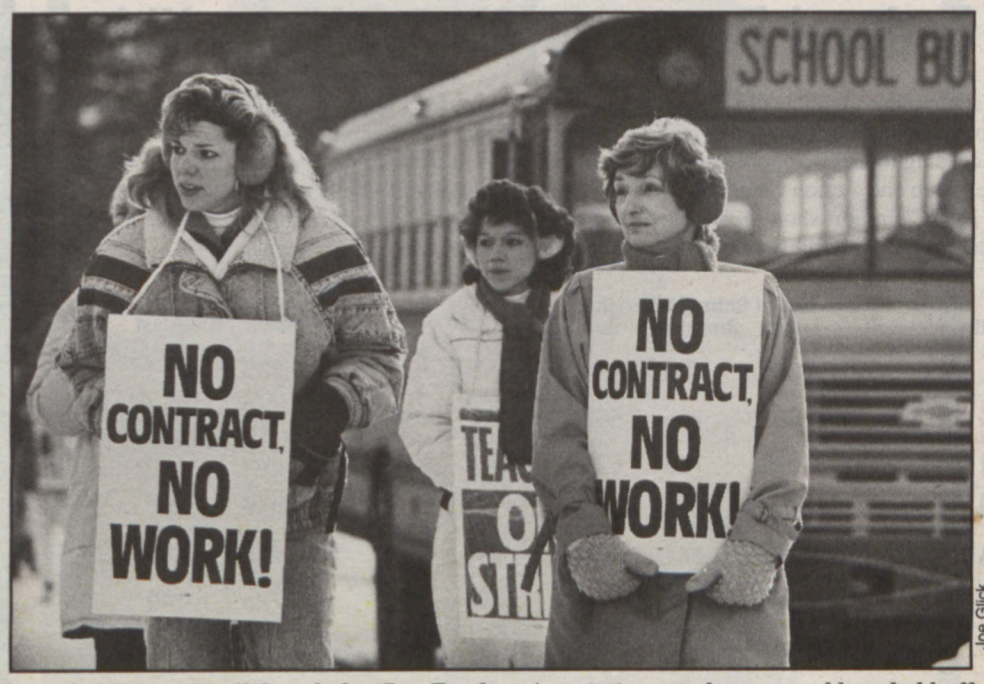
If you're a college student doing practice teaching for your education degree—and you're also a graduate of Osawatomie High School—you're eligible to apply for a financial pat on the back from Osawatomie NEA.

For the last three years, the local Association has been providing graduates in student teaching with $100 to $200 in funds to cover travel and other expenses—and to show its members' support for new teachers.

"We've had fundraisers all this year, including a Thanksgiving turkey raffle, because we think four students may apply next year," says David Scheib, who signs the students' checks as treasurer of the local.

"We have only 45 to 50 members," says local President Frances Hays, "so we have to hustle to keep up with our teaching students."

IN NORTHEAST OHIO



Joe Glick

It took three weeks off the job, but Bay Teachers Association members were able to hold off board efforts to weaken their contract.

Signs of the Times

When the Bay Teachers Association began bargaining a new contract, BTA negotiators presented a relatively simple offer—continue the current contract, with a modest salary raise. In return, BTA would make a few concessions on health care. What the teachers met instead shocked them.

The Bay Village school board presented BTA with 68 modifications to 19 articles of their 26-article contract. The most serious: that teachers alone be held accountable for student performance on proficiency tests. The teachers met that challenge with a strike.

For three weeks, Bay Village teachers walked the picket line. During that time, the board offered bonus points to students who crossed the picket lines and failing grades to those who honored them. The move backfired: most students chose to remain home.

The dispute was finally settled when a local judge locked the two parties in a jury room, told them to bargain, and acted as mediator. When it was over, BTA members were ecstatic.

The two-year contract contains a few concessions on health care, but none of the major modifications demanded by the board. "We also won language that said everyone—parents, students, administrators, and the school board—shares in the responsibility for student performance," says BTA President Lynn Aring.

"We're happy, but this is a valuable lesson about the way the public call for accountability can be used. We hope others learn from our experience."

OREGON

Small Local, Big Settlement

Unity pays off, no matter how small the numbers. Just ask the six elementary teachers who comprise the total membership of the Willowcreek Education Association. (Willowcreek is south of Ontario, on the Idaho border.)

The six teachers affiliated with the Association just last year. Soon after, they began bargaining their first contract.

Three WEA members served on the bargaining team. The president of the nearby Ontario local helped them get started; a UniServ consultant helped later in the process with mediation, near factfinding, and settlement.

It was tough going, but the six members held firm. The result: a contract providing a 33 percent increase in maximum salaries over two years, a comprehensive grievance procedure with binding arbitration and unlimited time to grieve, full just cause including dismissals and nonrenewals, and complaint and student discipline procedures.

The salary increases, achieved through a salary index increase plus five percent on the base salary for each of the two years, is especially significant, says UniServ consultant Diane Trainque, who helped the group.

"Willowcreek ranked last in the state in terms of salary," she notes. "This increase won't change the ranking overwhelmingly, but it's a dramatic first step."

CONNECTICUT

Biking for SARAH

Each fall, members of the Guilford (Connecticut) Education Association come together to organize the Bike Hike for SARAH, a local organization dedicated to helping the developmentally disabled. GEA President Ann Hinson is the force that brought the annual event into being 12 years ago. Guilford students provide the muscle power.

The GEA members carry the responsibility of organizing the Bike Hike. In the spring the organizers develop lists of teacher volunteers. Summer brings extensive preparations—securing permits, planning the five-mile bike route and a two-mile route for walkers, soliciting prizes, and producing publicity.

In September, a teacher volunteer in each school plans a student assembly where a SARAH representative talks about the Bike Hike. Interested students secure their family's permission to take part. Then—along with parents, teachers, and other school employees—each rider signs up sponsors who pledge a sum of money for each mile ridden.

Finally comes the Bike Hike itself, held the last Sunday of September. The event has raised as much as $17,000 in one year for SARAH.

"The Bike Hike is our most successful event sponsored by any outside organization," says SARAH official Gary Parrington. Parrington points out the immense benefit the students get from the volunteerism.

"This brings an experience to young children that carries the idea of helping others. High school and college students from previous Bike Hikes return to volunteer with SARAH."

LOUISIANA

Looks Like Justice

It looks like the Rapides Association of Educators has succeeded in getting $800,000 in teacher pay cuts restored. It wasn't easy.

When the school board ordered the cuts, RAE went straight to court. Next, a team of RAE leaders, with help from the Louisiana Association of Educators, found enough money from sales tax revenues plus anticipated state aid so that the pay cuts could be avoided.

At press time, the board was expected to restore the lost pay.

"The money's there," says RAE President Jamese Wambley. "The board can restore those cuts right away."

"We hope they do it," she adds. "We'd like to save the taxpayers the cost of legal fees."

State Side

NEW MEXICO

School Staff Gain Bargaining Law

Late last winter, New Mexico became the 37th state—the first since 1983—to pass a collective bargaining law that covers school employees. The law, which goes into effect April 1, 1993, applies to all state and local public employees.

The victory culminates a 25-year effort on the part of NEA-New Mexico to win passage of a collective bargaining law.

Administrator groups and their legislative allies have traditionally been hostile to public employee unions, especially school employee unions.

"To achieve passage of the bargaining bill, we participated in a strong coalition of public employee unions," says Ima Lee Wells, president of NEA-New Mexico. "We also worked closely with the governor and legislative leaders."

SOUTH DAKOTA

U.S. West Funds Indian Studies

The South Dakota Education Association's Office of Educational Innovation won a $75,000 grant recently from the U.S. West Foundation to develop and integrate Native American Studies into K-12 curriculums. The goal: to create an understanding of and appreciation for Native American history and culture.

The three-year grant will cover curriculum development, pilot testing in six schools, training for educators, and distribution of materials.

"There's a critical need for course work on the Native Americans and their cultural perspective," says SDEA President Clyde Clauson. "We're excited about the opportunity to make meaningful curriculum changes in this important area."

DELAWARE

Time for Action

When it comes to meeting the nation's education goals, the Delaware State Education Association isn't content to wait for state officials to take the lead.

The 8,000-member Association recently launched "It's Time for Action," a statewide program outlining its own plan to advance the six national education goals developed in 1990.

The public statement describes the actions DSEA and its members are willing to take to promote education reform in Delaware throughout the next decade. It goes on to issue a challenge to Delaware's legislators, businesses, organizations, and citizens to follow DSEA's lead.

"DSEA knows that the best results come when students, teachers, administrators, parents, legislators, and community leaders pool their knowledge and resources," says DSEA President Mary Anne Galloway.

FEEDING THE CHILDREN

Federal Program Misses Many Kids

Many children who would benefit the most from school breakfasts aren't getting them, according to a new report from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

FRAC's report shows that despite the widespread availability of the breakfast program, fewer than half the school districts that offer school lunch also offer school breakfast. And only about 32 percent of low-income students who participate in the school lunch program also receive a school breakfast.

State	No. of Schools Serving: Lunch	Breakfast	Both
AL	1,353	825	61.0%
AK	361	205	56.8
AZ	1,098	743	67.7
AR	1,120	810	72.3
CA	8,392	3,641	43.4
CO	1,349	471	34.9
CT	1,011	251	24.8
DE	173	154	89.0
DC	179	173	96.6
FL	2,540	1,880	74.0
GA	1,867	1,073	57.5
HI	268	234	87.3
ID	523	224	42.8
IL	4,302	1,201	27.9
IN	2,159	587	27.2
IA	1,801	704	39.1
KS	1,677	251	15.0
KY	1,508	1,085	71.9
LA	2,154	1,040	48.3
ME	735	317	43.1
MD	1,261	878	69.8
MA	2,057	978	47.5
MI	3,673	638	17.4
MN	1,853	550	29.7
MS	906	664	73.3
MO	2,428	1,068	44.0
MT	635	137	21.6%
NE	966	188	19.5
NV	305	186	60.8
NH	479	135	28.2
NJ	2,439	600	24.6
NM	726	440	60.6
NY	5,536	3,287	59.4
NC	1,989	1,689	84.9
ND	502	85	16.9
OH	4,047	1,391	34.4
OK	1,880	1,196	63.6
OR	1,211	459	37.9
PA	3,713	1,094	29.5
RI	346	97	28.0
SC	1,066	677	63.5
SD	568	190	33.5
TN	1,645	1,345	81.8
TX	5,890	5,594	95.0
UT	716	101	14.1
VT	335	99	29.6
VA	1,856	1,200	64.7
WA	1,755	1,235	70.4
WV	993	980	98.7
WI	2,328	379	16.3
WY	380	66	17.4
US TOTAL	89,056	43,495	48.8

Source: Food Rsearch and Action Center.

INDIANA

Teachers Win Own Standards Board

After a three-year effort by the Indiana State Teachers Association, Governor Evan Bayh signed into law a bill to establish an autonomous, teacher-majority professional standards board to license and certify teachers in the state. Nine of the board's 16 members will be teachers.

"Teachers have finally won the professional recognition accorded every other profession in Indiana," says ISTA President Garrett Harbron. "This is an historic event—not only for the teaching profession, but for Indiana schools."

Indiana joins five other states—Oregon, California, Minnesota, Iowa, and Georgia—in establishing autonomous professional standards boards. Lawmakers in Connecticut, North Dakota, and Maine may consider similar measures this year.

MONTANA

Joining Forces

The Montana Education Association and the Montana Federation of Teachers are working together in the interest of public education to find responsible candidates for public office.

Last month, the organizations co-hosted a gubernatorial candidate forum in Missoula. An audience of 500 heard five of the six major candidates answer questions posed by MEA President Eric Feaver and MFT President Jim McGarvey.

"Public education is facing an unprecedented fiscal crisis," says Feaver. "Whoever is elected governor could make or break us. The membership of our two organizations—about 14,500—can be a mighty force in this crucial election."

MEA and MFT also jointly endorsed Montana's incumbent U.S. Representative Pat Williams for reelection. Williams, a former teacher, is a long-time friend of education.

MASSACHUSETTS

Serious About Seniority

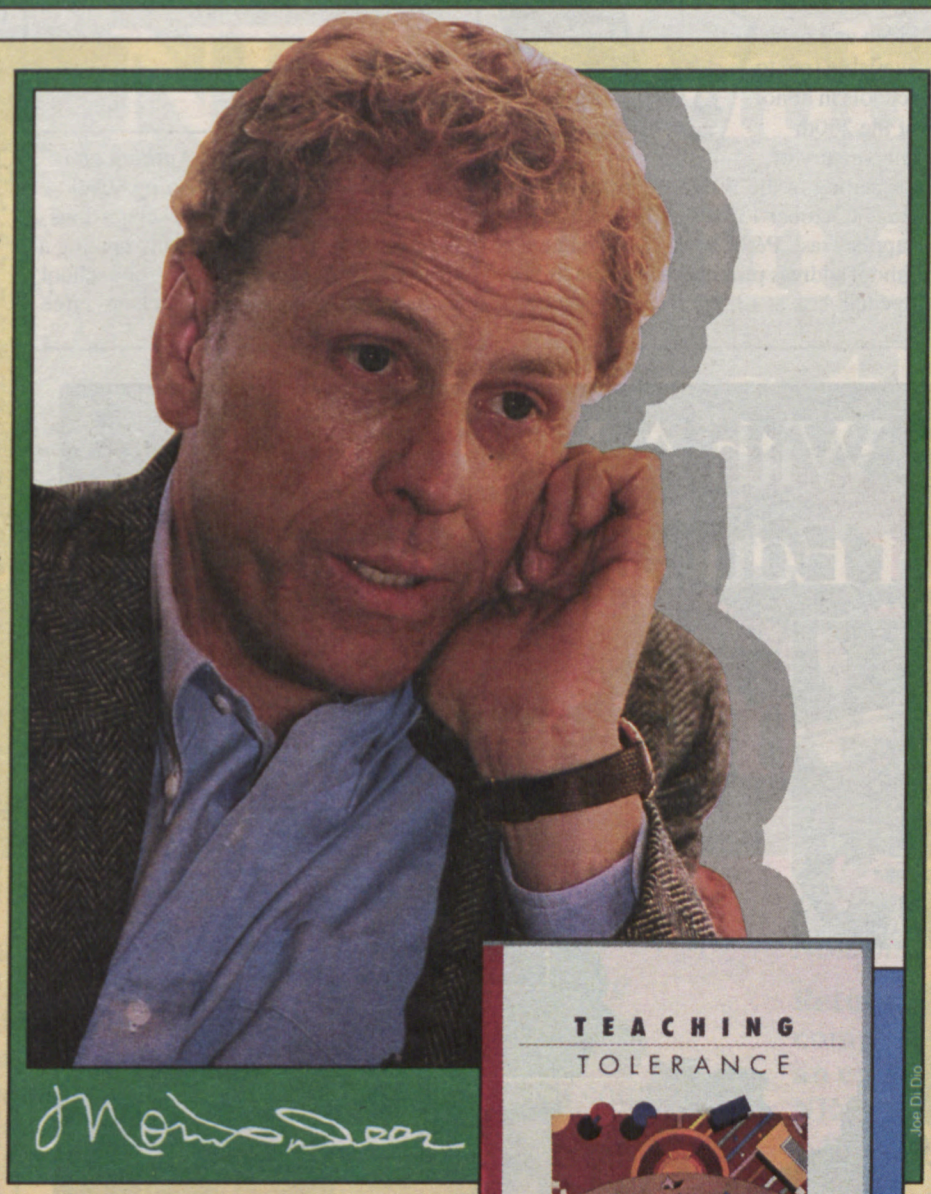
Gov. Weld's woeful school funding proposals and his attack on teacher security have Massachusetts Teachers Association members up in arms—and fighting back.

First there's the governor's much-lauded state aid formula. Turns out, the only *real* money in his proposals is some $200 million next year. That's pitiful, says MTA, after two years of starvation budgets.

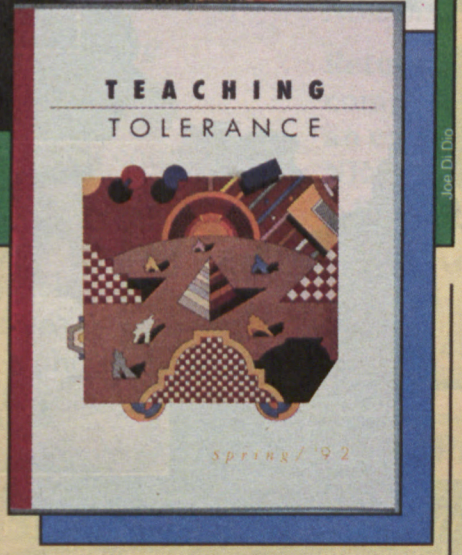
Then there's the matter of teacher seniority. Not only does the governor want to abolish teacher tenure and seniority rights, but he's also proposed testing teachers every five years.

In response, MTA launched a massive member campaign. "By putting our collective strength into an unprecedented grassroots lobbying campaign," says MTA President Rosanne Bacon, "we stand the best chance of crafting a reform law that will truly benefit public education."

Meet:



Teaching Tolerance



When Klan members lynched a Black man in Mobile, Alabama, in 1981, civil rights lawyer Morris Dees—and the Southern Poverty Law Center he founded—launched an historic lawsuit. They sued the Klan for inciting violence and won a $7 million precedent-setting judgment.

In 1990, Dees won a $12.5 million verdict for the family of an Ethiopian murdered by Skinheads in Oregon.

For his efforts, Dees's life has been repeatedly threatened, his offices burned. He's also won national acclaim and, most recently, NEA's Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Award.

Now Dees—an Alabama native who's as soft-spoken as he is fierce—says he's turning his organization "from the courthouse to the schoolhouse." Dees met recently with NEA Today *staff writer Stefanie Weiss to explain why.*

How would you assess the racial climate in America today?
Let me put it this way. In 1991 there were 25 documented hate murders in America. In 1964—when there were more hate murders than any other year of the civil rights movement—there were only 18, all in the Deep South. In 1991, only 3 of the 22 murders were in the Deep South.

Murders are really just the tip of the iceberg. Racial harassment's been picking up. Our 1991 final report shows a growing tide of racial intolerance all over America.

I think fear is behind it all. We have a very uncertain economic climate, and that's where most racism comes from.

Has your legal strategy of holding hate groups responsible for the violent acts of their members been successful?
No group we've sued exists anymore. There are still about 350 white supremacist groups of one type or another in America, but a lot of them are nothing more than a post office box.

The major hard-core groups, like the White Aryan Resistance—our lawsuits are really cooking 'em. WAR exists in name only now.

You can't shut a person up. Tom Metzger [WAR's leader] can be on the Oprah show if she wants to have him there. But he doesn't have the money to *do* anything because we're attaching everything he's got, right and left.

On a TV special, I watched you interrogate a white supremacist who bragged about beating a Black man to death. What goes through your mind when you're talking to someone like that?
Most of the white supremacists I've dealt with I see as individuals with low self-esteem—the Klan just got to them first. I really hold out hope, and I'm able to communicate with them.

There are exceptions. Tom Metzger, for example, this guy's beyond the pale. He's evil incarnate. But most of the former Klansmen who've come forward to help are perfectly good people.

You've been at this for more than 20 years. What keeps you going?
I guess I'm a trial lawyer at heart, and I like to represent individuals who've got a problem. I didn't start out to attack the Klan as a group. I simply represented a Black man who was charged with shooting a Klansman back in 1979.

And I saw that to defend him properly, I had to go after the Klan to show that they were out to attack and harass Black people. The lawsuits we've filed have sent a message to people who join these groups. They've brought down the individuals involved. Unfortunately, they haven't done much to change the racial climate in America.

Why not?
As Tom Metzger said in his press conference when he got beat, "Look, you may have killed me, but it's like killing a farmer after he's planted a seed."

Those seeds are not being sown on concrete. There's some fertile ground out there. The Metzgers—and the Aryan Nation crowd, and Richard Butler, and all the white student groups, whether they're at Dartmouth College or whether they're at you-name-it high school—are appealing to a very receptive audience.

That's when I say, "Hey look, we've got to get out there in the schools with them. We can't let the Skinheads get their message out in a high school with no challenge. We need to have the teachers."

Does this mean a change of direction for the Law Center?
Not really. We've been teaching history for a long time. In 1983, we did a film on the history of white supremacy in this country. It was called *The Klan: A Legacy of Hate*, and it aired on PBS.

We erected a Civil Rights Memorial in front of the Center in Montgomery. Then we did a book, *Free at Last*, about the history of the civil rights movement, that was used in schools.

We began to see tremendous interest. Teachers wrote us, asking what else we had. That's when we decided to set up a division called Teaching Tolerance—our education project.

So you think teachers can make a difference?
I don't think teachers are *the* answer—just one of the answers. Here's a story a teacher told me: Four little Japanese kids were sitting at a table, and a little Black kid came into the class. The teacher overheard one of the little Japanese kids say "Ewww, we don't want him at our table."

The teacher picked up on that and introduced the Black kid by telling where he came from, what his parents did, what hobbies he had. And all the children began to work on a project together.

After awhile, the teacher overheard one of the Japanese kids say, "Hey, you think we can get Willie on our project next time?" The children had learned to know him as a person.

How will the Teaching Tolerance project help?
We want to get teachers who are doing a good job teaching tolerance to tell us how they do it. We can gather the material and get it out and paid for. We've committed $2 million a year of the funds we raise for the first five years of the project.

Then it's up to people like your readers to begin to change things.

Are you hopeful about the future of race relations in America?
Yes. We'll solve these problems. America ebbs and flows—it always has. In the '20s, we had the most Klan activity in the history of this country, and most all of it was in the North. It was against the immigrants who had come to this country. But it changed.

We pulled ourselves together after the Depression and World War II. People had something bigger to fight for. Since the civil rights movement and the influx of new immigrants into this country, we've seen a gradual growing resentment among whites—a backlash.

I think that will pass. But the next 10 years are going to be real tough, especially in the schools. Teachers know that better than anybody. They're on the front lines.

The Southern Poverty Law Center publishes *Teaching Tolerance*, a twice-yearly, color magazine, full of practical information to help teachers "promote interracial and intercultural understanding."

If you'd like a free copy of the next issue, write to *Teaching Tolerance*, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104.

A Season for Justice: The Life and Times of Civil Rights Lawyer Morris Dees. Morris Dees with Steve Fiffer, Macmillan, 1991. 337 pgs. $24.95.

RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

HISTORY/CIVICS

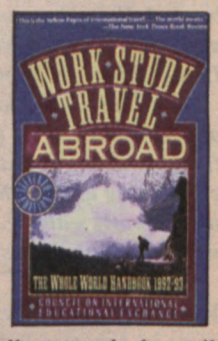
Within These Walls: A Visit to the White House (30-minute video) and ***The Living White House*** (magazine-style book, 9th ed., 151 pp.) A very special offer from the White House Historical Association and Very Special Arts makes video and book available free to schools in honor of the 200th anniversary of the setting of the White House cornerstone (October 13, 1992). Free while supplies last. P&h, $6.95. Send name and school address plus check payable to Very Special Arts at 1331 F St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington DC 20004, Att: White House Resource Materials.

LITERATURE

Inviting Children's Book Authors and Illustrators to Your Community. Children's Book Council. Offers suggestions for choosing, arranging for, and hosting a children's author or illustrator for a school visit. 4 pp. Single reproducible copy, free with SASE (#10 with 1 oz. 1st class postage). Children's Book Council, Att: ARTIST VISITS, 568 Broadway, Suite 404, New York, NY 10012.

TRAVEL

How To Find Jobs Teaching Overseas. James Muckle. An experienced overseas teacher tells you how he got his jobs in places like England and Saudi Arabia, and gives names and addresses of sources where you might find yours. 2nd ed. 90 pp. $7.95 includes p&h. KSJ Publishing Co., P.O. Box 2311, Sebastopol, CA 95473.



Work, Study, Travel Abroad. Council on International Educational Exchange. The whole earth catalog of overseas study and job opportunities. 502 pp. 11th ed. 1992-93. St. Martin's Press, $12.95. From booksellers or order by mail (add $1.50 p&h for book rate, $3 for first class) from CIEE, Publications Dept., 205 E. 42nd St., New York, NY 10017.

SCIENCE

Mineral Resource Films & Videos. Bureau of Mines, U.S. Department of the Interior. Catalog describes award-winning films and videos—available to schools on short-term free loan—about the use of minerals like gold and copper and about recycling aluminum cans. Free. Audiovisual Library, U.S. Bureau of Mines, P.O. Box 18070, Pittsburgh, PA 15236.

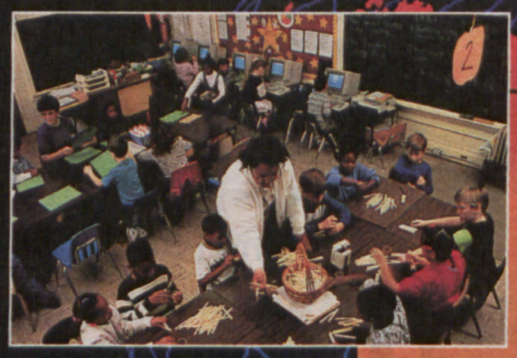
EDUCATION ISSUES

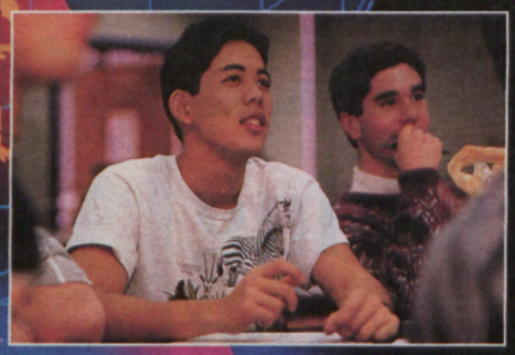
Cornerstones for a New Century. Ernest L. Boyer. The education policy leader offers solid proposals for teacher preparation and early childhood education—plus a national index of education objectives and a way to assess how states are meeting those objectives. 48 pp. Stock no. 1846-X-00-FF. $7.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516, 800/229-4200.

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES

Science for Kids: 39 Easy Engineering Experiments...39 Easy Geography Activities...39 Easy Plant Biology Experiments. Robert W. Wood. Brief diagrams illustrate simple experiments. About 130 pp. each. $9.95 each. TAB/McGraw-Hill, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17294, FAX 800/932-0183.

Link Up With A Nationwide Network of Education Solutions.





Each month USA TODAY publishes a special section of the newspaper, dedicated to ideas, programs and people who are solving some of education's problems. And the news is good.

Among the sections' themes:
- Cultural diversity
- Year-round schools
- The teaching profession
- At-risk youth
- Science and math education
- Technology

Who reads the section? USA TODAY's 6.6 million powerful readers—decision-makers, educators, parents, community leaders, consumers, corporate executives, professionals—people who spot good ideas and use them in their own communities.

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Look for the section in USA TODAY the third Wednesday of each month. And write to the Coalition on Educational Initiatives at the address below with your Education Solutions. For reprints, call: 1-800-635-5525.

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TLI042

The Pay

Today, educators are elbow-deep in changes that will revolutionize their schools—changes in demographics, technology, curriculum, instructional techniques, and school organization.

But there are precious few revolutionary changes in educators' paychecks. With 30 states experiencing deficits, it's been a tough year for most school employees' salaries and benefits. And next year may be even tougher.

Certainly, salaries aren't the only measure of our well-being, but they are important measures of the value society places on our work. And they are critical to the profession's ability to attract and retain the best.

This snapshot of the salary basics reveals ups and downs, some good news and some bad. Mostly, it says there's lots of room for improvement.

National Average Salary For Teachers Tops $34,400

Average Annual Salaries of Classroom Teachers (1991-1992)

Region and State	Current	Percent Change Over 1990-91
50 States and D.C.	$34,413	4.4
New England	38,698	5.8
Connecticut	47,300	8.0
Maine	29,672*	4.0*
Massachusetts	38,066*	5.5*
New Hampshire	32,445	3.7
Rhode Island	36,047	3.0
Vermont	33,420*	7.9*
Mideast	41,599	5.5
Delaware	34,548	–2.0
District of Columbia	41,256*	4.5*
Maryland	38,843	1.2
New Jersey	41,381	7.7
New York	44,200	5.0
Pennsylvania	38,540	6.9
Southeast	29,219	1.9
Alabama	26,954	0.3
Arkansas	26,569	12.5
Florida	31,119	1.8
Georgia	29,680	1.7
Kentucky	30,880	6.1
Louisiana	27,037*	3.0*
Mississippi	24,428	0.3
North Carolina	29,334	0.2
South Carolina	28,209	–0.3
Tennessee	28,726	1.7
Virginia	31,921	–1.0
West Virginia	27,298	5.1
Great Lakes	35,975	4.7
Illinois	36,623	5.8
Indiana	33,755*	4.1*
Michigan	40,251*	5.0*
Ohio	34,359	5.3
Wisconsin	33,873	2.0
Plains	29,987	3.5
Iowa	29,196	4.4
Kansas	30,808	3.5
Minnesota	34,782	5.0
Missouri	28,880	2.1
Nebraska	27,231	2.4
North Dakota	24,145	2.4
South Dakota	23,300	4.1
Southwest	28,842	4.8
Arizona	31,892*	3.6*
New Mexico	26,653	3.5
Oklahoma	25,721	5.2
Texas	29,041	5.0
Rocky Mountains	29,562	3.3
Colorado	32,926*	3.5*
Idaho	26,759	5.0
Montana	27,513	2.8
Utah	26,524	3.7
Wyoming	29,000	0.0
Far West	39,729	5.3
Alaska	44,725*	3.0*
California	41,811	5.6
Hawaii	34,528	6.1
Nevada	33,175	3.0
Oregon	33,656*	4.2*
Washington	34,880	5.4

Source: NEA Research
*Data estimated by NEA.
Kansas: The Kansas State Board of Education includes three separate forms of compensation in its average teacher salary: teaching salary, any supplemental salary, and fringe benefits.
Nevada: Average reported salaries do not include a 9.25 percent pickup of employees retirement contributions by local school districts. Teacher salary with pickup is $36,244.
Oregon: Salaries include a 6 percent pickup of employee portion of retirement contribution by employer.
Rhode Island: Method of calculating average salaries has been changed. Extra compensation for department heads, coaching salaries, student club activities, and extra duties is no longer included.

43%

Percentage of 'A' and 'B' students who expect to earn over $30,000 a year in their first job after completing their education.

Percentage of 1990 U.S. labor negotiations where health care was cited as a major issue: **83%**

Picture

Annual rate of increase of real disposable income during the Bush Administration (the worst rate for any Administration since World War II).

0.4%

Average top executive salary—

In 1980: 25 times the average blue-collar salary

In 1990: 91 times the average blue-collar salary

Starting Salaries: How Does Teaching Stack Up?

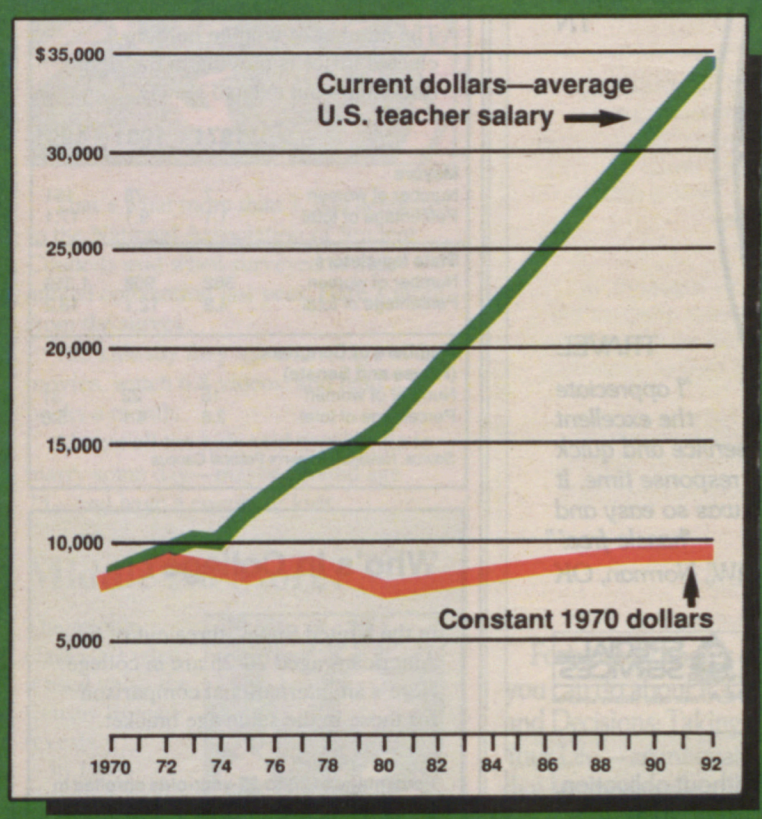
Estimated Starting Salaries For New College Graduates of 1992

Academic Majors	Estimated % Change	Estimated Starting Salary for 1991-92*
Chemical Engineering	3.0%	$38,394
Advertising	0.9	$22,194
Liberal Arts/Arts & Letters	1.7	$21,667
Retailing	0.9	$20,030
Computer Science	3.0	$32,106
Civil Engineering	2.4	$29,824
Physics	1.7	$29,724
Nursing	2.0	$29,159
Geology	1.1	$28,776
Chemistry	2.2	$28,105
Mathematics	1.7	$27,835
Accounting	2.3	$27,195
Marketing/Sales	1.3	$26,124
General Business Administration	2.5	$25,653
Financial Administration	1.7	$25,382
Education	1.8	$23,402

Source: Patrick L. Scheetz, 1991. *Recruiting Trends, 1991-92.* East Lansing, Mich.: Collegiate Employment Research Institute, Michigan State University, 1991.

*90-91 — $21,300 for teachers (NEA estimate).

The Impact of Inflation On Salaries



Average hourly earnings in 1990: $10.02, unchanged in real terms from 1989—the lowest real hourly earnings in two decades.

Support Staff Salaries

	National Average Hourly Wage or Salary 1990-91*	Percent Wage Increase Over Previous Year
Bus Drivers	$9.52	3.4%
Cafeteria Workers	7.19	6.2
Instructional Aides	7.77	4.6
Noninstructional Aides	7.43	4.9
Custodians	9.05	6.0
Library Clerks	$12,696	4.5%
Building Secretaries	16,953	4.8
Central Office Secretaries	21,303	6.3
Payroll Clerks	21,202	5.5
Clerk Typists	16,859	4.6

*Latest available figures.

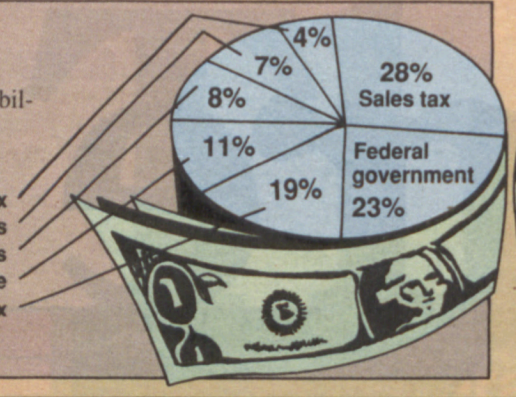
Note: Hourly wage rates and salaries are presented as national averages since they are based on a nationwide survey of some 1,000 school systems. They do not, however, represent true national averages, but rather summaries of what these school districts reported to the Educational Research Service (ERS).

Source: *Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel in Public Schools, 1990-91.* © 1991 by Educational Research Service, Arlington, Va.

DATA BANK

State Revenue . . .

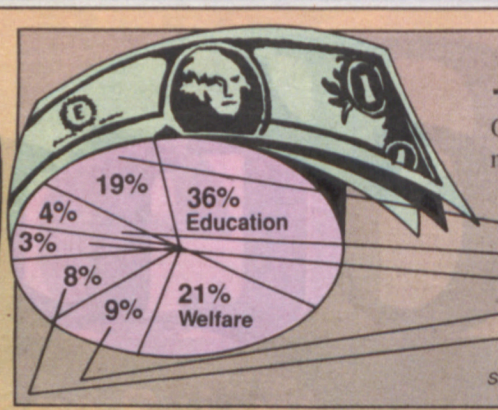
State governments collected $517 billion in 1990 from these sources:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *USA Today*

. . . And State Spending

On average, here's how state governments spent $508 billion in 1990.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *USA Today*

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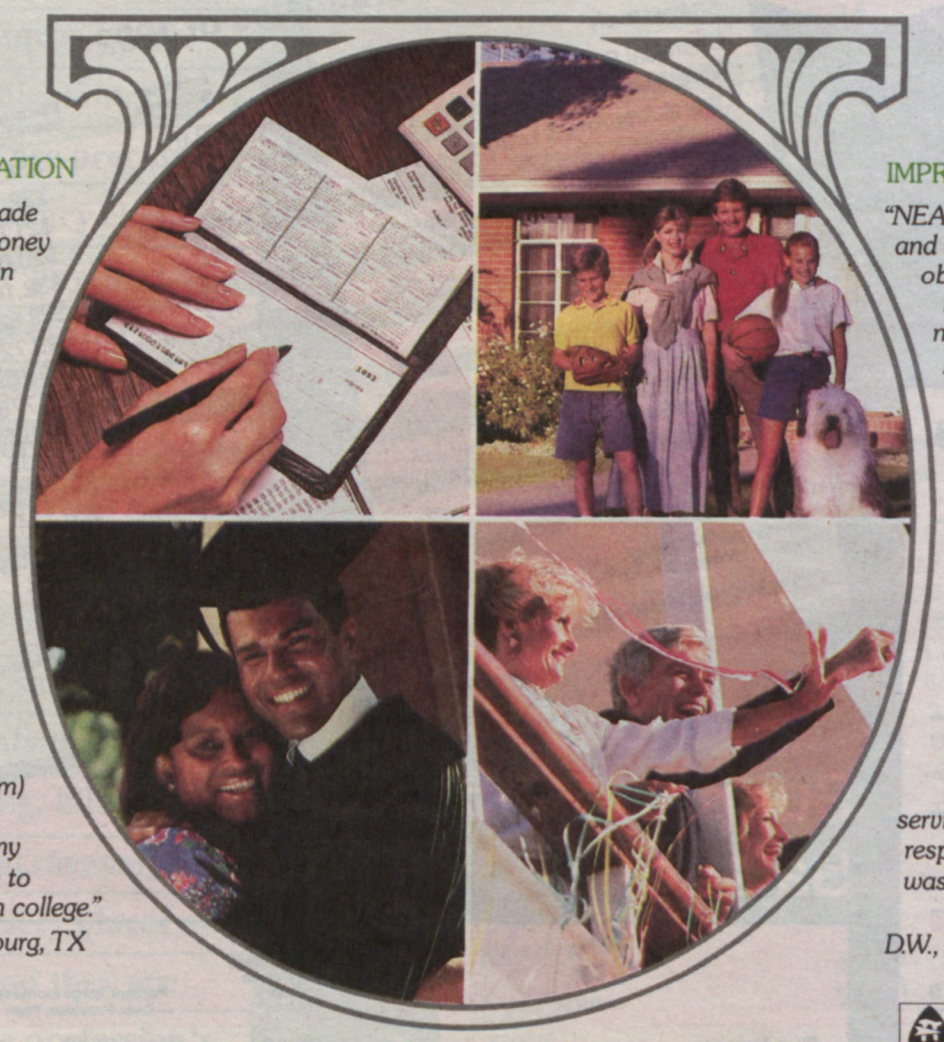

BILL CONSOLIDATION

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HOME IMPROVEMENTS

"NEA made it easy and convenient to obtain a loan in the privacy of my own home."
D.J., Memphis, TN

COLLEGE TUITION

"This (program) has made it possible for my three children to graduate from college."
F.C.B., Petersburg, TX

TRAVEL

"I appreciate the excellent service and quick response time. It was so easy and 'hassle-free.'"
D.W., Norman, OK

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TCP042

Aging Buildings

Over half of our nation's school buildings are 30 years old or older, according to a recent report, *Schoolhouse in the Red*. One in eight is considered "inadequate."

Here's when schools in use today were built:

Before 1950	30.6%
1950-'59	21.4%
1960-'69	22.4%
1970-'79	14.3%
1980-present	11.2%

Source: American Association of School Administrators

Women in Politics

The number of women holding elected office is moving in the right direction—but ever so slowly.

	1971	1981	1991
Mayors			
Number of women	7	78	151
Percentage of total	1.1	9.1	17.1
State legislators			
Number of women	362	908	1,359
Percentage of total	4.8	12.1	18.2
Members of Congress (House and Senate)			
Number of women	15	22	31
Percentage of total	2.8	4.1	5.8

Source: National Women's Political Caucus

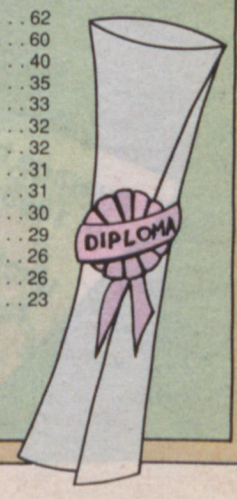
Who's in College?

In the United States, three out of five Americans aged 20-25 are in college. Here's an international comparison for those in the same age bracket.

Percentage of 20-to-25-year-olds enrolled in college

Canada	62
United States	60
Finland	40
France	35
Belgium	33
Netherlands	32
Spain	32
Austria	31
Sweden	31
Japan	30
Australia	29
Italy	26
Switzerland	26
United Kingdom	23

Sources: World Bank, World Development Report, 1991



TRENDS

For the Children?

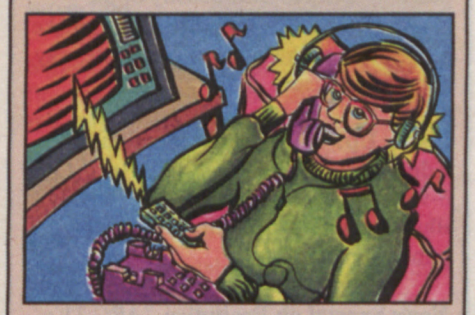
The end of the Cold War could signal a new beginning for the world's children if our efforts were directed toward ending illiteracy and malnutrition and preventing disease, asserts the new UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) annual report.

Today, nobody's got it right, says *The State of the World's Children 1992*. Poor nations spend only 12 percent of their budgets on health and education; rich states spend an even smaller proportion on such programs.

The UNICEF report also encourages world leaders to fulfill the pledges they made at the September 1990 World Summit for Children at the United Nations in New York. At that conference, leaders pledged by the year 2000 to cut the death rate of children under 5 by one-third, to halve the malnutrition rate among young children, and to provide a basic education for all children.

What Kids Do

They watch 2.4 hours of television a day, spend 2 hours a day on the phone (girls talk a half hour longer than boys), and listen to 4 hours of music a day.



That's what more than 1,200 delegates to the National Association of Student Councils said when surveyed at their annual convention last year. Here's more from the survey.

The kids say they see an average of 2.4 movies, watch 6.8 videos, and read 2.3 books a month.

Almost all the kids said they'd like to marry some day—maybe around age 25—and have a couple of kids.

Middle No More?

The middle class isn't what it used to be, the Census Bureau reveals.

In 1989, roughly 63 percent of U.S. families were considered middle class, down from more than 71 percent 20 years ago. The Bureau's study shows that about 15 percent—up less than 4 points in 20 years—of American families enjoy high incomes. Meanwhile, the number with low incomes grew by more than 4 points, to 22 percent.

Kids under 18 have been hurt disproportionately: they're a third more likely to be poor than kids their age were in 1969.

The 1989 median income for a family of four is $37,152. A low family income is defined as half the median income, or $18,576, while a high family income is set at twice the median income—$74,304.

Unhooked

Evidently, the "Hooked on Phonics" commercials on television and radio are falling on deaf ears when it comes to reading experts.

Last spring, the International Reading Association asked a team of experts to evaluate the "Hooked on Phonics" package, which claims to be able to teach reading to everyone from adults to young children to those just learning English. One set of materials—cassette tapes, flash cards, and books—costs $180.

In the IRA study, the experts, like Harvard's Jeanne Chall, fault "Hooked on Phonics" for not helping kids blend letters into words or understand the meanings of words.

The makers of the phonics package call the criticism "sour grapes."

Another IRA reviewer, Jean Osborn of the University of Illinois' Center for the Study of Reading, says it's not so surprising a program like "Hooked on Phonics" has caught on.

"There's little agreement among the experts on how reading should be introduced and taught," notes Osborn. "The designers of this program stepped in and targeted dissatisfied parents."

©Visa U.S.A. Inc. 1992

Unfortunately, this is the only financial decision most kids are qualified to make.

Fortunately, there's something you can do about it. Get "Choices and Decisions: Taking Charge of Your Life"—an innovative program that lets students learn the realities of financial decision-making.

Through the use of your computer system, videodisc player and TV monitor, kids can make decisions for on-screen characters and see the final outcome of their choices—good or bad. In the process, they'll discover how to achieve their own financial goals.

They'll learn comparison shopping, applying for a loan and managing checking and credit-card accounts. All in a simple, educational and entertaining way. Created in a joint effort between Visa and LucasArts Learning, Choices and Decisions includes computer software, lesson plans, outlines and activities for both interactive and paper-based learning. The program is also available for both Macintosh and IBM system formats and is offered at no charge.

So do something good for your students. And their parents. Order Choices and Decisions today. Just call 1-800-235-3580 for more information. Because although your students know how to spend money, it's time they learned how to use it.

CHOICES & DECISIONS
TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE

RESOURCES

TV Tips

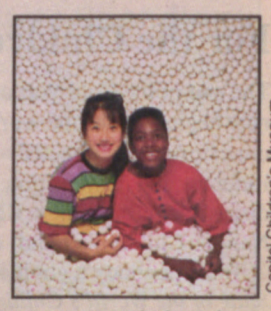
PBS

The Creative Spirit—*PBS, Thursdays, April 2-23, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Four-partseries on creativity. April 2: "Inside Creativity." Defining human qualities that bring creativity to life. April 9: "Creative Beginnings." Understanding how childhood experiences relate to creativity. April 16: "The Creative Spirit at Work." Making the workplace a haven for creative ideas. April 23: "Creating Community." Viewing creativity as a way of caring for others.

The Machine That Changed the World—*PBS, Mondays, April 6-May 4, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Five-part series on the rise of modern computer technology, from the massive machines of the 1940s to the desktop supercomputers of the 1990s. *(above: an early photo of Apple co-founders Steven Jobs, left, and Steven Wozniak)*

Apple Computer

Schoolbreak Special: Witnesses (tentative title)—*CBS-TV, Tuesday, April 7, 4-5 p.m. ET.* When two teens of different races start dating, they must deal with pressures from family and friends.



Capitol Children's Museum

The Infinite Voyage. Insects: Ruling Class—*PBS, Wednesday, April 8, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Microphotography shows how many kinds of insects live, mate, communicate, and defend their territory.

Condition Critical: The American Health Care Forum—*PBS, Wednesday, April 8, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Discussion that's the cornerstone of a year-long campaign to stimulate a sustained debate on the health care issue.

Frontline: The State of Democracy—*PBS, Tuesday, April 14, and Wednesday, April 15; check local listings for times.* Miniseries that's part of a national campaign to increase the intensity of the health care debate and to help voters make sense of what Presidential candidates say about health care.

Listen Up! Voices in Celebration of Education—*PBS, Wednesday, April 15, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Music, drama, and comedy illustrate nationwide efforts to improve public education.

News Special on Prejudice—*ABC-TV; check local listings for date and time.* News anchor Peter Jennings hosts a viewer phone-in discussion on prejudice in America. For a free study guide produced by KIDSNET, contact your local ABC station.

3-2-1 Contact Extra—*PBS, Wednesday, April 22.* 8-8:30 p.m. ET: "A Popular Little Planet." Exploration of the implications of a growing population and factors that limit or encourage growth. 8:30-9 p.m. ET: "Get Busy: How Kids Can Save the Planet." Ways that children and adults can help preserve the earth's environment.

Teacher TV—*The Learning Channel, Sunday, April 12, 6-7 p.m. ET, subsequent Sundays, 6-6:30 p.m. ET.* After a rebroadcast of the original hour-long pilot, NEA and The Learning Channel launch a 13-week series about teachers and education. Tentative topics and themes include business and education, teacher-designed school programs, and how technology is reshaping teaching and learning. (See *Your NEA*, page 32.)

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a clearinghouse for children's TV and radio programming in Washington, D.C.

Viewers' Guide for "In the Company of Whales" Gentle Giants of the Seas

ASSIGNMENT DISCOVERY

Part I premieres Wednesday, April 29, and repeats on June 17. Part II premieres on Friday, May 1, and repeats on June 19. All programs will air at 9-10 a.m. ET on Assignment Discovery. Check local listings for the time and channel in your area.

Grade Levels: Upper elementary through high school levels

"What does it take to awaken humanity to the fact that life on earth is a fragile miracle made possible by a delicate balance of nature contained within an even more delicate gossamer veil of atmosphere?"

Dr. Roger Payne

Dr. Roger Payne, the world's foremost cetacean biologist and a life-time observer of the largest mammals on earth, hosts and narrates this two-hour documentary produced by the Discovery Channel. Each program includes unique scenes of whales interacting with each other, with humans, and with their environment, including the first recorded underwater charge at humans by a giant sperm whale and the first footage of the rarest of whale species, the bottlenosed whale.

Payne explains why we must understand whales if we are to combat the serious dangers that face them and the world. For our own sakes, as well as theirs, the program tells us, we must learn about and from the whales.

Curriculum areas: Science, ecology, history, geography, social studies, language arts, media, fine arts, dramatic arts.

Objectives:

This guide has been provided in conjunction with this program to:

- explore the interaction between whales and humans, among whales, and between whales and their environment.
- describe the early whaling industry and its effect on the whale population;
- understand the effects of the marine pollution on the whale population.
- describe the life work of Dr. Roger Payne and explain how his effort raised human consciousness about the whale population.

Synopsis

In the programs, Dr. Roger Payne introduces us to the different types of whales, explains where and how they live, and describes the dangers confronting them. He takes us beneath the oceans where these huge, intelligent, gentle and affectionate creatures harmoniously inhabit a unique environment spanning the earth. We hear and watch how whales communicate with each other, and our host explains what the whales are trying to tell us as well.

Activities

- **Geography**

Dr. Roger Payne shows viewers different parts of the world where whales live. Identify and locate the places he talks about on a map of the world.

- **Science, Ecology**

Payne introduces several different types of whales during the program. Have students research and report on the various species. Create a bulletin board with pictures, maps and current events articles about whales.

- **Science**

Whales use echolation, or sound-waves to "see" three-dimensionally in the ocean. Discuss how their sonar system works, and how it compares to different sonar devices created by humans.

- **Social Studies, Language Arts**

Payne mentions that the whaling industry was an important part of early American life and history. Research and report on the whaling industry. Compare your reports to the great American novel, *Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville.

- **Science, Ecology**

Payne emphasizes that all of us must do something about the environment to save the whales and ourselves. The program describes whales as "the canary in the coal mine." What does that analogy mean? Discuss marine food chains. How are people endangered by a problem that faces whales?

- **Science**

Visit a local aquarium or natural history museum, or have an oceanographer come and speak. Discuss the local environment and its ecology. Discuss what young people can do to save the whales and their environment.

- **Science, Fine Arts**

Throughout the program, we hear whales singing to each other. How do whale songs compare to human music? Create songs or poems about whales and the world we live in.

Books and Resources

Ellis, Richard, *Men and Whales,* Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1991.

Evans, Peter, *The Natural History of Whales and Dolphins,* Facts on File, Inc., New York, 1987.

Grzimek, Dr. Bernard, *Animal Life Encyclopedia,* Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York, 1975.

Small, George, *The Blue Whale,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1971.

Teachers can tape Assignment Discovery programming and use it in the classroom for up to one year. The Educator Guide, published quarterly, is available by calling 1-800/321-1832.

Discovery Channel

This guide was written by Nancy Karkowsky for KIDSNET, the clearinghouse for children's audio, video, radio and television, and is a regular feature of NEA Today. We welcome your comments. Write to KIDSNET, 6856 Eastern Avenue, N.W., Suite 208, Washington, DC 20012.
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IDEA EXCHANGE

A Rock To Hold Onto

All of us, whatever our age, like to lean on a "rock" when we face a difficult situation. Columbia, Missouri, middle school counselor Mary Lou O'Brien provides that rock—literally—to her students.

O'Brien invites students to write essays on "Doing Your Best in Difficult Situations." Winners get to choose one of her colorful polished rocks to display at home as a reminder of what they wrote.

O'Brien encourages students to bring their rocks to school for encouragement on days when they're facing problems or just feeling blue.

Speak Up!

Battery operated, voice-activated, plastic dancing flowers help Massachusetts teacher Ruby Melkonian Saltmarsh's fourth graders gain self-esteem, poise, and voice projection.

Each day, the teacher at Robin Hood School, in Stoneham, places the plastic flowers on several of her students' desks. If a child with a flower-adorned desk doesn't make the flower dance when speaking or reading aloud, the child must speak louder—until the flower does dance.

Saltmarsh explains that she rotates the flowers daily to avoid singling out shy students. That way, "making the flowers dance" is a fun activity that encourages the youngsters to project their voices and assert themselves.

Pride in Community

Florida technology lab teacher Elaine Willis helps middle grade students at Bagdad Elementary School appreciate the heritage of their community in the state's panhandle, near Pensacola. At the same time, through her "History in Our Own Backyard" program, she leads them to recognize the need to preserve its resources and protect its environment.

First, Willis briefly introduces the youngsters to architectural terminology. Then she distributes a list of neighborhood landmarks for them to find, with the help of walking tour brochures, and then to photograph or draw.

The students also create a time line, relating historical events in their community to events in U.S. history.

Finally, working alone or in groups, the youngsters research a product important to their community. They find out how it's made, how its production affects the surrounding environment, and how much it contributes to the local economy.

Willis is able to put some powerful resources behind the program: a video camera and player, a camera and slide projector, an audio tape recorder, and—perhaps most important of all—a computer with laser disk programs and programs that can produce drawings.

Literary Lunch

What? Read aloud to seventh and eighth graders? Of course, says librarian Judy Seredynski at RHAM (Regional Hebron, Andover, and Marlboro) Middle School in Hebron, Connecticut.

In fact, Seredynski reads to them every day during what she calls "Literary Lunch." She selects a popular young adult novel, announces its title to the entire school, and invites students to sign up to come to the library every day with their lunch and listen until the novel is completed. Kids who sign up get to go to the head of the lunch line so Seredynski can get "off and reading" without delay.

Seredynski suggests that educators who want to try their hand at reading to middle schoolers consult *The New Read-Aloud Book* by Jim Trelease. Her most popular offerings include *The Eyes of the Dragon* by Stephen King and *Snow Bound* by Harry Mazer.

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. . .with the NEA Homeowners Insurance Program

What comes to mind when you think about the comforts of home? Maybe it's that couch in the living room where you like to curl up with a favorite book. Or, it could be the way the sun shines through the kitchen window on a sunny summer morning. Whatever comes to mind . . . your Association has a homeowners insurance plan that offers you protection for all of your "comforts of home."

To find out more about the NEA Homeowners Insurance Program, simply clip and mail the coupon below. Or, call the toll-free service line, **1-800-999-1030** and **press "4"**, 7 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. Central time.

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People

Craig Line

Teaching a State To Read

"We're aiming for a literate Vermont by the year 2000," says Essex Junction Latin teacher **Mary Ann Chaffee** (right). "People laugh, but someone has to do it."

"Our business as teachers is not to teach people to read, but to make them readers," adds German and English teacher **Barbara Mieder** of Milton.

Most teachers would applaud these goals—but unlike most teachers, these two are actually in a position to do something about them. Chaffee is chair, Mieder vice-chair of the Vermont Council on the Humanities.

The two Vermont-NEA members are bringing the Council a strong emphasis on literacy—and the programs they spark aren't held just in the community for adults, but in prisons and in schools. The Council regularly sets up special reading groups for at-risk high school students, family reading groups, and book discussion groups. A "Books and People" conference last fall drew 400 adult new readers from all over the state.

Vermont's Council, like the other state Councils for the Humanities, gets some funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. But it doesn't stop there. "We've applied for corporate funding and raised $175,000 in private donations," says Chaffee. Council programs also reached some 28,000 Vermonters in 1991.

A literate Vermont within eight years? Don't laugh yet.

Historian Eggstraordinaire

He's an egg man. **George W. Terrell, Jr.**, world history instructor at Alabama's Gadsden State Community College, knows volumes about the world's most famous egg collection—the Fabergé eggs created between 1885 and 1917 in Imperial Russia.

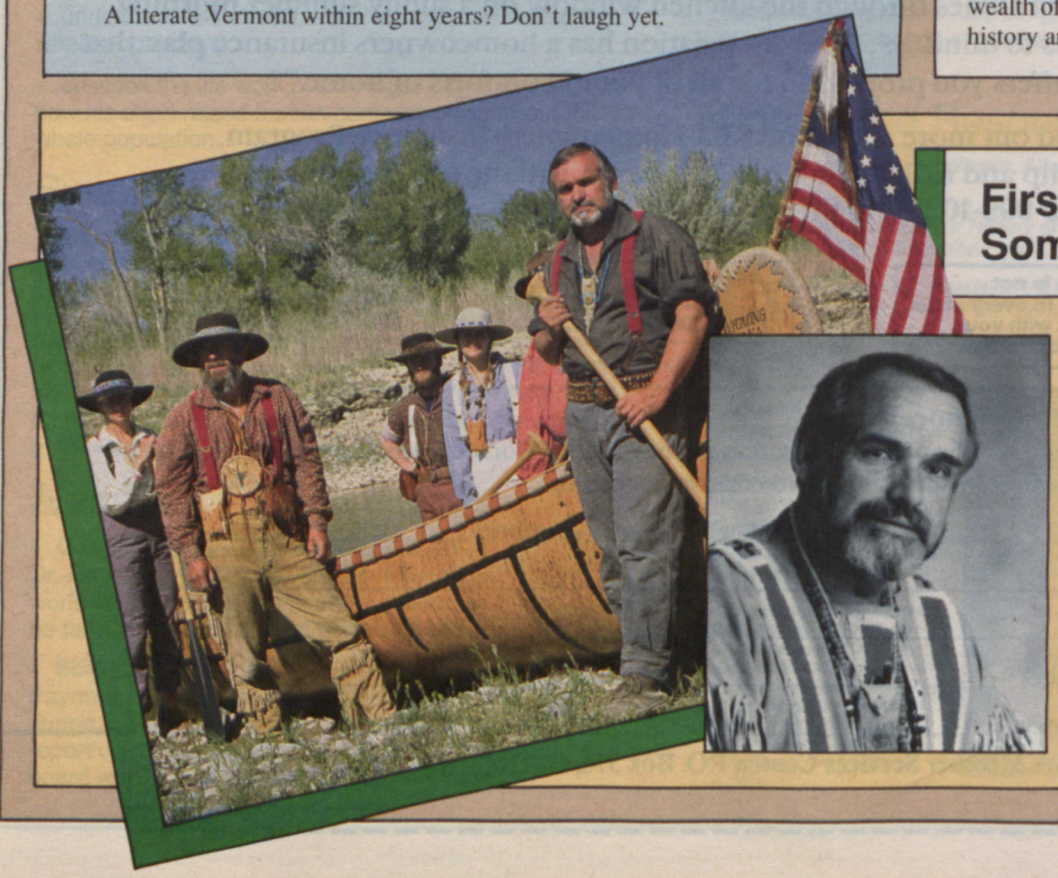
As a child, Terrell, a lifelong history buff, loved the romance of the Nicholas and Alexandra era in Czarist Russia.

After reading about the Fabergé collection—the bejeweled gold and silver egg-shaped art objects that Czar Nicholas ordered each Easter for his wife and mother—Terrell was determined to see them.

Terrell has seen virtually all of the 45 eggs in public collections (the largest is the *Forbes* magazine collection in New York City). And he's put his eight trips to Russia to good use in the pursuit of egg-viewing.

While serving as a lecturer in Moscow, Terrell got to know Irena Polynina, the foremost Russian authority on gems, minerals, and historical jewels. Polynina will speak at Gadsden State Community College during an upcoming exhibition of Fabergé silver from the *Forbes* collection. Pictured here with Terrell is Irena Rodimtseva, director of the Kremlin museums in Moscow.

"Not only are these eggs perfectly made," notes Terrell, "but within the intricate workmanship is a wealth of information about Russian history and culture."



First, Trap Some Beavers...

...and once you've got 100 pounds of pelts, you can do what **Allan Maybee** and his five-person crew did: recreate the 2,700-mile 1825 canoe trip of General William Ashley down Wyoming's Wind River, the Big Horn, the Yellowstone, and the Missouri to the Mississippi and St.Louis.

The trip celebrated the centennials of six Western states.

As you might surmise, Maybee teaches history—at the Riverton Alternative School in Riverton, Wyoming. On the 72-day canoe trip in summer 1989, he and his companions—three men and two women—lived in 19th century conditions. They dressed in buckskins and coonskin hats, ate beef jerky and tortillas, and when the latter got moldy, just boiled them up.

"We figured we took 1,260,000 strokes apiece," Maybee says. The boat was a 500-pound fiberglass Voyager canoe, painted to look like birch bark. The beaver pelts? "Purely symbolic cargo—we sold or donated them in St. Charles, Missouri."

Comstock

Larry Mayer

Going the Extra Mile

When it comes to teaching students about the environment, Montana teachers **Chris Kersten** (in blue jacket), **John Miller** (in red jacket), and **John Battaglia** (not pictured) walk, bike, and hike the extra mile.

Three years ago the trio from Billings West High School organized a student Outing Club, designed to help kids develop environmental awareness through recreation.

Kersten, Miller, Battaglia, and their charges often bike 20 miles after classes, backpack through nearby mountains and canyons on weekends, and ski cross-country when the weather cooperates. And their activities aren't limited to the school year. They also camp out during the summer.

Kersten and Miller, both science teachers, and Battaglia, an English teacher, are transplanted Easterners who really appreciate the unspoiled grandeur of the Big Sky country. They're avid bikers and backpackers whose enthusiasm rubs off on their students.

Outing Club members learn more than camping techniques and backcountry etiquette, explains Kersten. He and his two colleagues also teach about history, geology, ornithology, and trailbuilding.

"When you live in a place as beautiful as Montana," says Kersten, "you can't take it for granted. You have to work for its preservation."

Literary Guides

For the past three years, Virginia teacher **Julia Nixon** and her husband **Samuel Nixon**, a library media specialist, have combed their state. Their search leads them to little-known facts about Virginia's famous—and lesser-known—writers and to places that played a role in the authors' lives and work.

"We found an old house where Edgar Allan Poe did the last public reading of *The Raven*, and the country home where Willa Cather grew up," recalls Julia Nixon, who teaches writing at Clover Hill High School in Chesterfield. "We even discovered a perfectly preserved 1950s drugstore once frequented by novelist Mary Johnson."

The result of the Nixons' labor: *A Guide to Virginia's Literary Heritage*, published by the Virginia Educational Media Association.

The Nixons' odyssey began many years ago when they took their children to Thomas Wolfe's house in Asheville, North Carolina. After making trips to visit New England's literary sites, the two Virginians had an idea. Why not create a guide for their own state? The rest is literary history.

To order the book, send $15.95 plus $2.50 p&h to VEMA, P.O. Box 5820, Radford University, Radford, VA 24141.

Dan Collier

You and NFIE: Making a Difference

ADRIENNE MORELAND

"Kids with disabilities can learn: They just need the tools to do it."

Few teachers understand these tools better than California elementary teacher Adrienne Moreland. And Moreland's able to share her knowledge, thanks to support from the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. Created by the National Education Association, NFIE encourages educators to explore new models for learning — and become leaders in school reform.

Adrienne Moreland is an expert in using technology to make learning fun and effective for her K-6 students. At a recent symposium sponsored by NFIE, Moreland demonstrated how a child lacking motor skills may seem to be a poor speller when writing by hand, with b's and d's confused. But given an electric typewriter, the same child may spell well. With a word processor, the child can easily correct mistakes and turn out work as neatly as anyone.

With financial support from NFIE, Adrienne Moreland is continuing to share her expertise with hundreds of other educators and policy makers. That's exactly why the NEA created NFIE, and Moreland's work is just one example of how NFIE is helping teachers shape the future of education in America.

NFIE is your foundation, and it's the only organization devoted to directly empowering teachers. At NFIE, we not only acknowledge excellence in educators, we also provide the resources they need to create successful learning environments for students.

With you and NFIE working together, we can make a difference. Teachers like Adrienne Moreland are the proof.

Adrienne Moreland works with students with learning disabilities at Mt. Woodsen Elementary School in Ramona, California. As one of NFIE's Christa McAuliffe Educators, she says, "The seminar let me get away from the day-to-day demands of teaching, get in touch with other professionals, and get charged with new ideas."

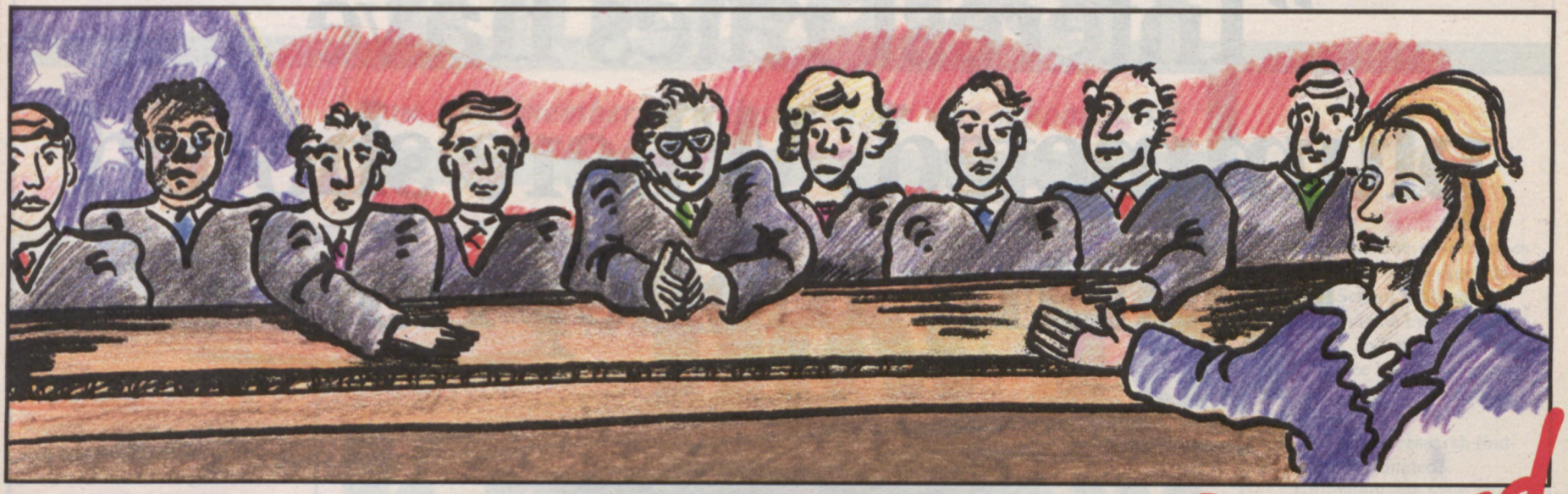
For more information about how you can participate in NFIE programs, write NFIE, 1201 16th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036, or phone 202/822-7840.

NFIE

National Foundation for the Improvement of Education.

A non-profit, tax-exempt foundation created by the National Education Association.

LEGAL TIMES



Roe v. Wade and Beyond

If the Supreme Court overturns the decision in* Roe v. Wade, *basic constitutional rights could be threatened.

If an unwed teacher becomes pregnant as the result of a rape, can a school board fire her because she chooses not to have an abortion?

No—a woman has the constitutional right to reproductive freedom. At least for now.

This is not some hypothetical case; an NEA member actually was fired for choosing childbirth rather than abortion. And consistent with its policy in favor of reproductive freedom, NEA, along with its state affiliate, provided legal assistance to the teacher who successfully argued that her firing was illegal.

This case powerfully illustrates why NEA's policy supporting the right to reproductive freedom is not "pro-abortion" but pro-choice. The constitutional right to reproductive freedom includes the right to choose childbirth rather than abortion.

The facts of Jeanne Eckmann's case were circulated widely in the national media in the early 1980s. Eckmann had spent two years preparing to be a nun in a St. Louis convent before leaving to become a school teacher. She taught in Catholic schools for six years before taking a job in the public schools.

In November 1980, Eckmann was raped while returning from a religious retreat. Although she did not report the assault to the police, she did confide in her roommate several weeks later. In December Eckmann discovered she was pregnant and told her superintendent, who suggested that she keep her pregnancy quiet. After all, people in the small Illinois district might talk.

To avoid any risk to her job, Eckmann could have gotten an abortion. But "as a devout Catholic," she would later say, "I would not even consider abortion."

Eckmann took medical leave in April 1981. A month before her delivery, the board president and school superintendent paid her a visit. According to Eckmann, the president "said I should resign because I was immoral."

When Eckmann said she'd been raped, he answered, "You may be asked to certify that."

Instead of resigning, Eckmann contacted her UniServ director. He went to the next school board meeting to argue against any adverse action.

But in July the board began the dismissal process. Eckmann received a notice alleging, among other things, that she was "guilty of immorality": "your conduct in becoming pregnant outside the state of marriage has lessened your ability to teach and the ability of your students to learn their lessons from you."

On the next day Eckmann's son was born.

Eckmann returned to teaching in the fall of 1981 but was fired in January 1982. With the help of NEA and the Illinois Education Association, she challenged her dismissal before a state hearing officer. NEA and IEA eventually spent $36,000 in legal fees.

Noting that it is unconstitutional to fire a teacher for having a child out of wedlock, the hearing officer ruled that Eckmann had been illegally dismissed and ordered her reinstated with full back pay.

Eckmann then retained her own attorney and sued the school board for violating her constitutional rights. The trial judge ruled that the right to choose childbirth rather than abortion is part of the constitutional right to privacy established by *Roe v. Wade*.

"If the right of privacy means anything, it is the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child," the court said.

In July 1985, the jury found for Eckmann.

Of the three NEA-funded federal appeals defending members' rights under *Roe v. Wade*, none involved the right to abortion. Rather, all three asserted other privacy rights grounded in *Roe*, including the right to nurture a child, to bear a child, and to divorce.

In *Dike v. School Board of Orange County, Fla.* (1981), for example, NEA challenged a school board decision forbidding a teacher to breastfeed her baby on school grounds during her duty-free lunch period. NEA argued that the right to rear children is encompassed in the right to privacy recognized by *Roe v. Wade*.

Calling breastfeeding "the most elemental form of parental care," the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals held that—like "individual decisions respecting marriage, procreation, contraception [and] abortion"—breastfeeding is constitutionally protected.

The issue in *Littlejohn v. Rose* (1985) was whether a school board violated a teacher's right to privacy by refusing to renew her contract because she was involved in a divorce. NEA argued that the right to divorce is constitutionally protected under *Roe v. Wade*.

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed. Citing *Roe*, the court held that "matters relating to marriage and family relationships involve privacy rights that are constitutionally protected against unwarranted governmental interference....*Roe* clearly established...a constitutionally-protected right to privacy which includes matters relating to procreation and marriage."

Finally, in *Avery v. Homewood City Board of Education* (1982), NEA relied on *Roe* in arguing that the dismissal of a teacher because of an unwed pregnancy violated her right to procreation. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed that such a termination was unconstitutional, but based its decision on equal protection rather than privacy grounds.

When delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly convene in Washington, D.C., next July, a few blocks from the U.S. Supreme Court, there is a real possibility that *Roe v. Wade* will no longer be the law of the land.

The High Court will soon hear *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, in which the Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld most provisions of Pennsylvania's restrictive abortion law.

Most of these provisions had been struck down by the Supreme Court in several post-*Roe* cases. But the Third Circuit concluded, in light of more recent Supreme Court decisions, that the High Court has abandoned its holding in *Roe* that abortion is a fundamental right under the U.S. Constitution.

Most interested observers agree that the Rehnquist Court eventually will overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

The demise of *Roe* will have serious consequences for NEA members. Compelled completion of pregnancy will result in more teachers being fired for "immorality."

Even worse, the legal argument that saved the jobs of Eckmann and Avery may no longer succeed: if the right to privacy does not protect the right to choose abortion, it may not protect the right to choose childbirth.

Finally, as the privacy cases funded by NEA illustrate, *Roe v. Wade* is the cornerstone of many fundamental rights we now take for granted: marriage, procreation, childrearing, and family life, to name a few. Once that cornerstone is removed, other privacy rights are at risk.

NEA is signing onto an *amicus* brief in the *Casey* case. Sponsored by Planned Parenthood, the ACLU, and the Women's Law Project, the brief will argue that fundamental constitutional rights, once recognized by the Supreme Court, should not be taken away, especially not as a consequence of a personnel change on the Court.

Arguments in the case likely will be heard in April, and a decision should be announced before the Court recesses the first week in July.

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

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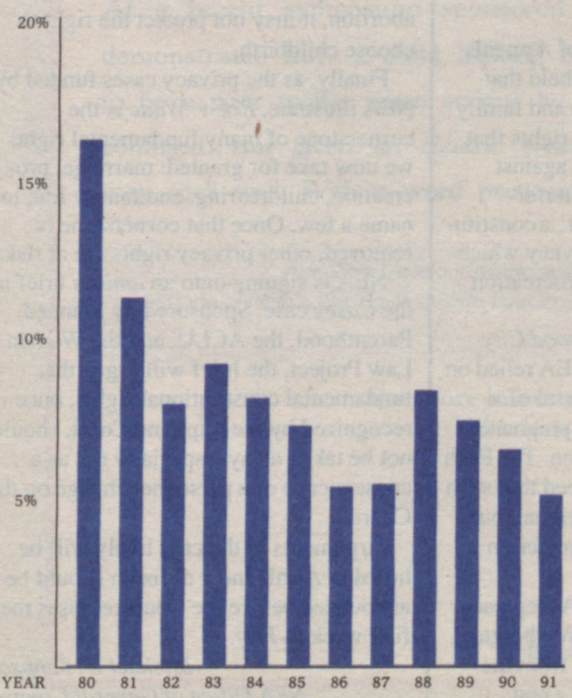
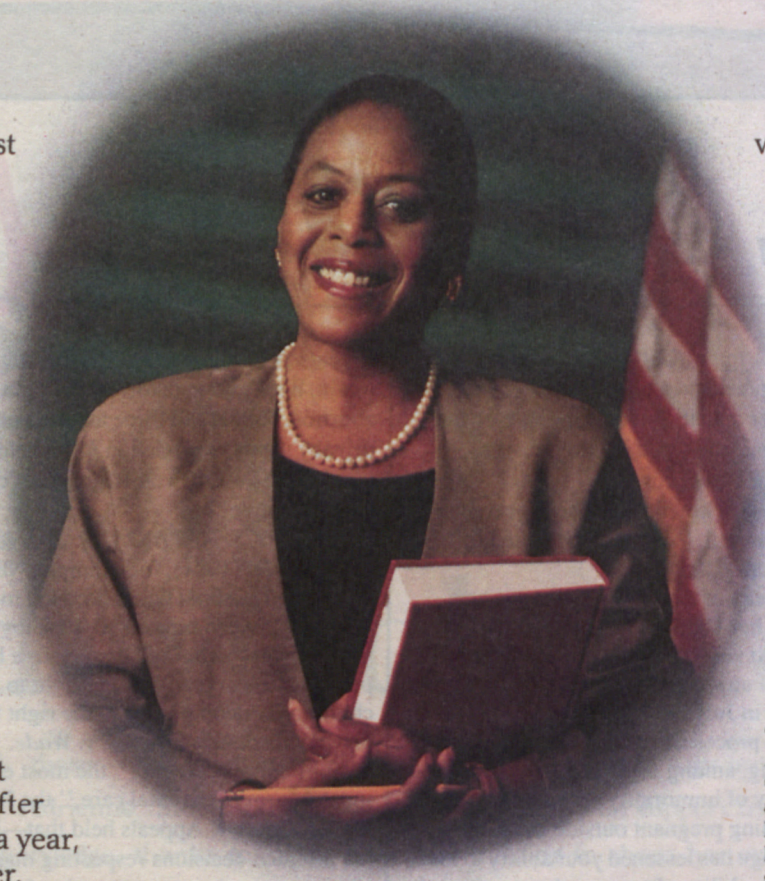


*3 months U.S. Treasury Bill Index Rate from January 1980 through year end 1991. (Source: U.S. Treasury Department)



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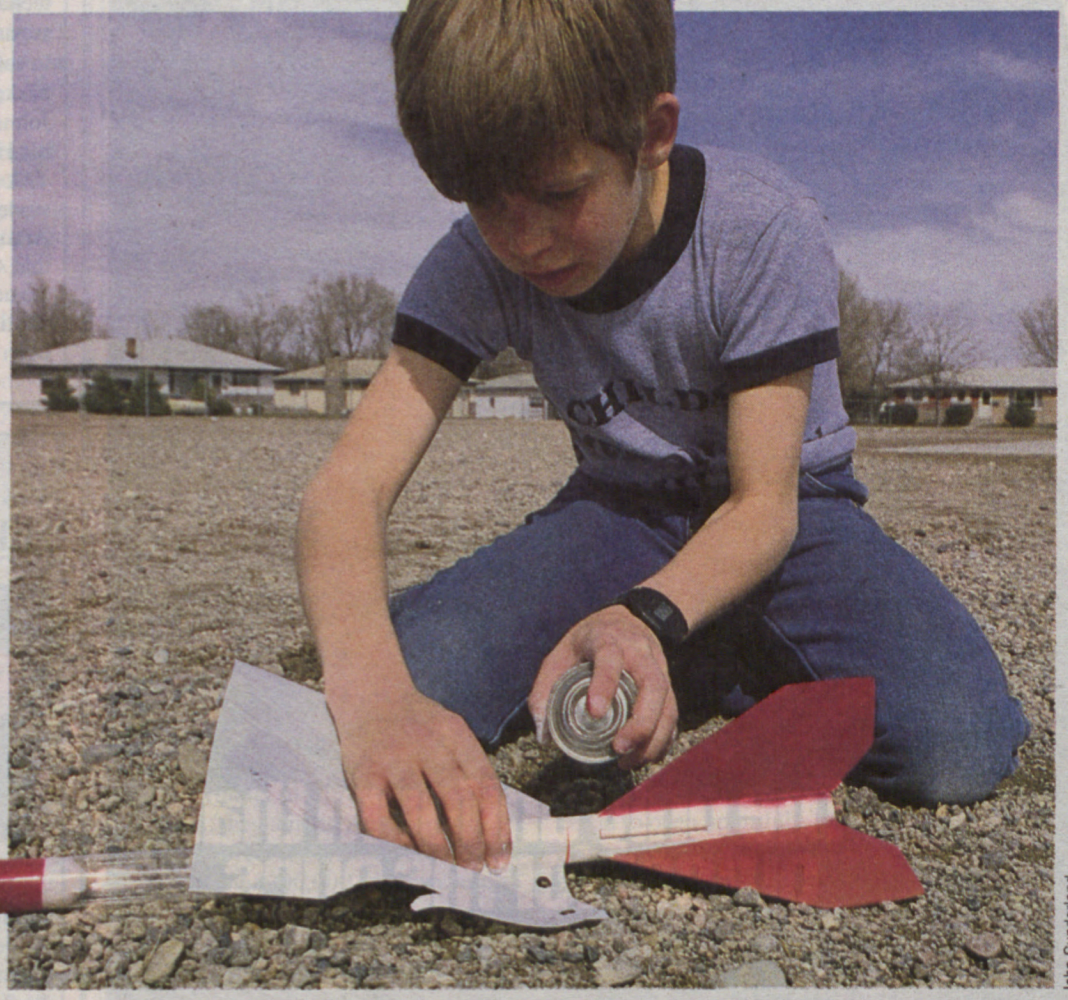
TTD492

Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

In Virginia

How To Know What He Knows?



John Sunderland

Certainly not by tests alone, say 22 Virginia teachers studying alternative forms of student assessment. The laboratory? Their own classrooms.

When third grade teacher Charmaine Brooks wanted to know if her students had learned their science lessons on the brain, she began with a standardized test.

"What I discovered was that 50 percent of my students could regurgitate the facts, but few had an understanding of what those facts meant," recalls Brooks, an elementary science teacher at Westover Hills Model School in Richmond.

Brooks then led her students through a hands-on experiment. The students built their own brain models, examined the different parts, and placed them in a liquid solution.

"Throughout this experiment, they described what they discovered and confirmed what they knew," says Brooks. "They even took pictures and explained to other classes what this experiment was all about."

At the end of the project, Brooks knew that nearly all students had a solid understanding of the lesson.

What Brooks discovered is at the heart of a unique project that will link Brooks and Westover colleague Gertrude Jones with 20 other classroom teachers across the state. Their guiding principle—the idea that there are better ways to assess student learning than a standardized test.

The project is a collaborative effort among the Virginia Education Association, the Appalachian Regional Education Laboratory, the Virginia Department of Education, and the NEA. (For more on NEA-state affiliate work on assessment issues, see box at right).

For the next two years, 11 pairs of teachers from elementary, middle, and high schools across the state will explore alternatives to standardized tests. Their findings will be recorded in journals, examined in meetings, and eventually disseminated to their colleagues.

"When it comes to developing alternative forms of assessments, who better to develop, implement, and judge effectiveness than the classroom teacher," says Helen Rolfe, VEA project coordinator and director of instructional development.

"This project will produce a 22-member vanguard of experts," adds Rolfe. "These experts will be able to teach their colleagues about alternative forms of assessment that can be used from early childhood to adolescence. By nurturing these teachers, our organizations are creating a powerful model for the state, and the nation."

"We already know paper and pencil tests don't accurately measure the ranges of a child's learning," says Brooks, a 19-year classroom veteran. "What we're doing is looking at the whole child and developing methods that display all aspects of that child's ability to learn."

"With a test and a letter grade, a student doesn't often understand the process of learning," says Lee Shiflette, who teaches third grade at Ashby-Lee Elementary School in Roanoke. "With hands-on experiments, portfolios, and other methods, a child can see her own progress and understand what it means to learn."

How will the research findings be disseminated?

"Ultimately, the team will provide staff development to hundreds of teachers through various school, community, and Association events," says Rolfe.

"A publication will outline the approaches used by the teacher teams and include implementation case studies, telling the stories of the teams' efforts and conclusions. The second year, video training tapes will be made."

"Teachers teaching teachers is the best staff development," adds Rolfe. "By sharing successful teaching strategies, we can truly talk about changing instruction and assessment. And that's revolutionary."

—Anita Merina

In Concert: NEA And State Affiliates

To share information on what state affiliates are doing to improve student assessment and accountability, NEA recently created the State Affiliate Consortium on Assessment and Accountability.

Through this consortium, educators in 12 states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Virginia—will share information and insights about the impact of assessment and accountability on the teaching profession.

NEA's role: coordination, funding, and technical assistance.

In addition, NEA is funding six demonstration projects focusing on accountability methods—from the VEA project on assessment alternatives to a joint project between the Association's California and Connecticut affiliates to develop a resource manual for teachers on student testing.

—A.M.

LOOKING BACK

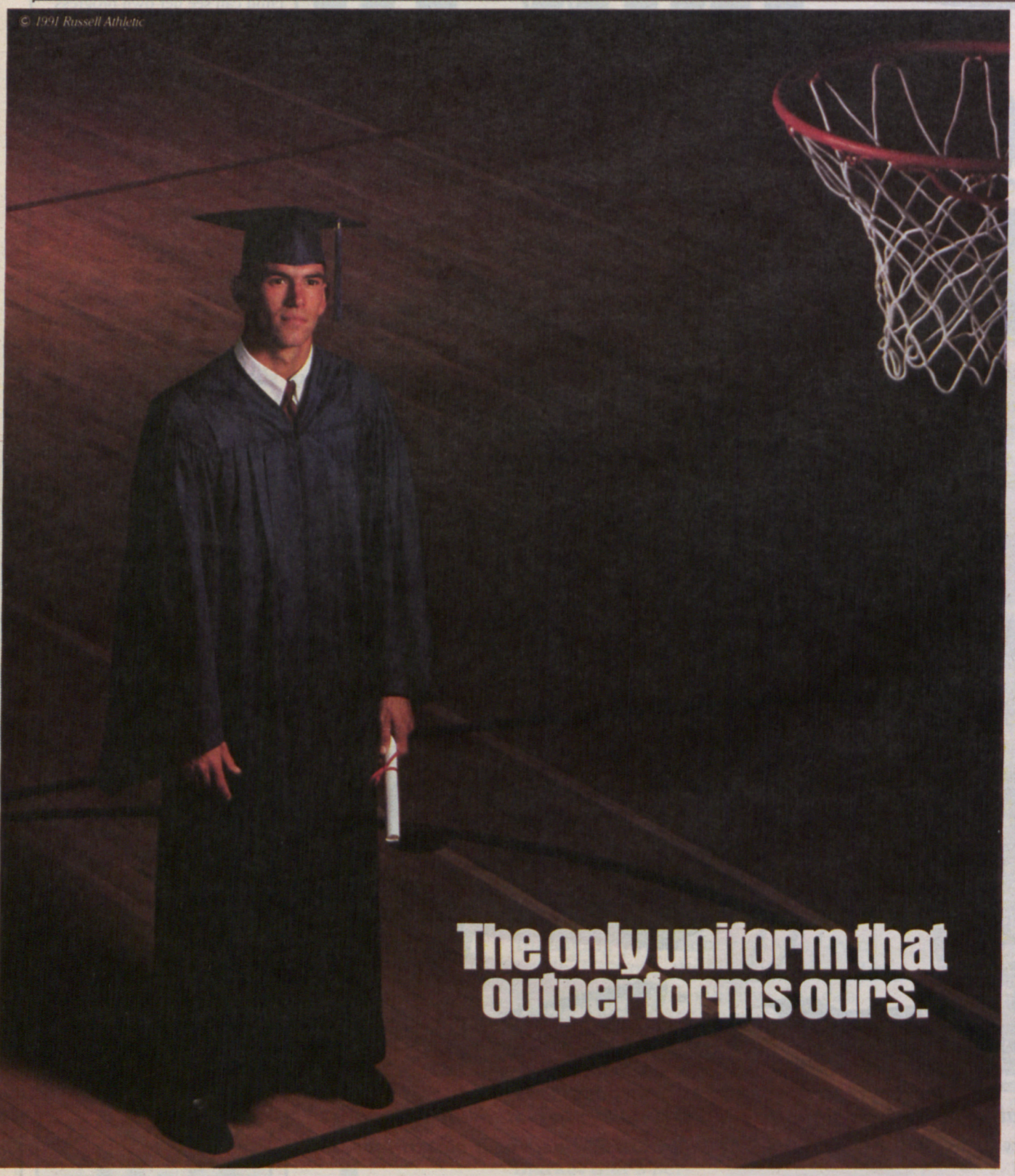
Recruiting Teachers

Gordon Chibroski

The scene in an advertisement: A group of students name their heroes. Mixed in among the Magic Johnsons and Michael Jordans are names not as easily recognized but important nonetheless. These heroes are teachers.

"Be a Teacher, Be a Hero," is the new national ad campaign by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., an organization dedicated to attracting people to teaching. The ads feature several NEA members, including 1990 National Teacher of the Year finalist Billy Dean Nave of Maine (People, March 1990), and 1987 Mississippi Teacher of the Year Edward Wong.

"These are teachers," the ads say, "but to the kids they've reached, they've given them hope. They've given them choices. They've changed their lives."



Even though we make America's best known athletic teamwear, we know that no other uniform can compete with a cap and gown. So we're making posters like this ad available to coaches and teachers to help remind athletes that an education can keep them competitive long after their playing days are over.

RUSSELL ATHLETIC WORN BY AMERICA'S TOP TEAMS 42

STAY IN SCHOOL

For more information about our "Stay In School" campaign, write: Russell Corporation, Dept. M, P.O. Box 272, Alexander City, AL 35010.

An update of stories from previous issues

Go Ahead, Teach It

The lessons may be hard ones, but teach them anyway, say most Americans.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that 94 percent of Americans support AIDS education in schools ("Hard Lessons to Teach," February 1991), 80 percent favor teaching students about condoms, and 70 percent support condom ads on television.

Condom distribution in the schools, however, is still a hot potato, says the report's co-author Karen Donelan.

The numbers appear in a report by the Harvard Program on Public Opinion and Health Care, which sifted through about 95 percent of the national public opinion surveys on the topic since 1983.

In a more troubling survey, many teenagers admit they haven't given up sexual activity or made a commitment to safe sex, even after professional basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson's announcement last fall of his HIV-positive status.

A survey of 3,000 outstanding students conducted by Who's Who Among American Students revealed that 42 percent of those who were sexually active said they "would continue to have sexual intercourse even if a condom weren't available."

Expanding the Bilingual Ed Ranks

Bob Riha, Jr.

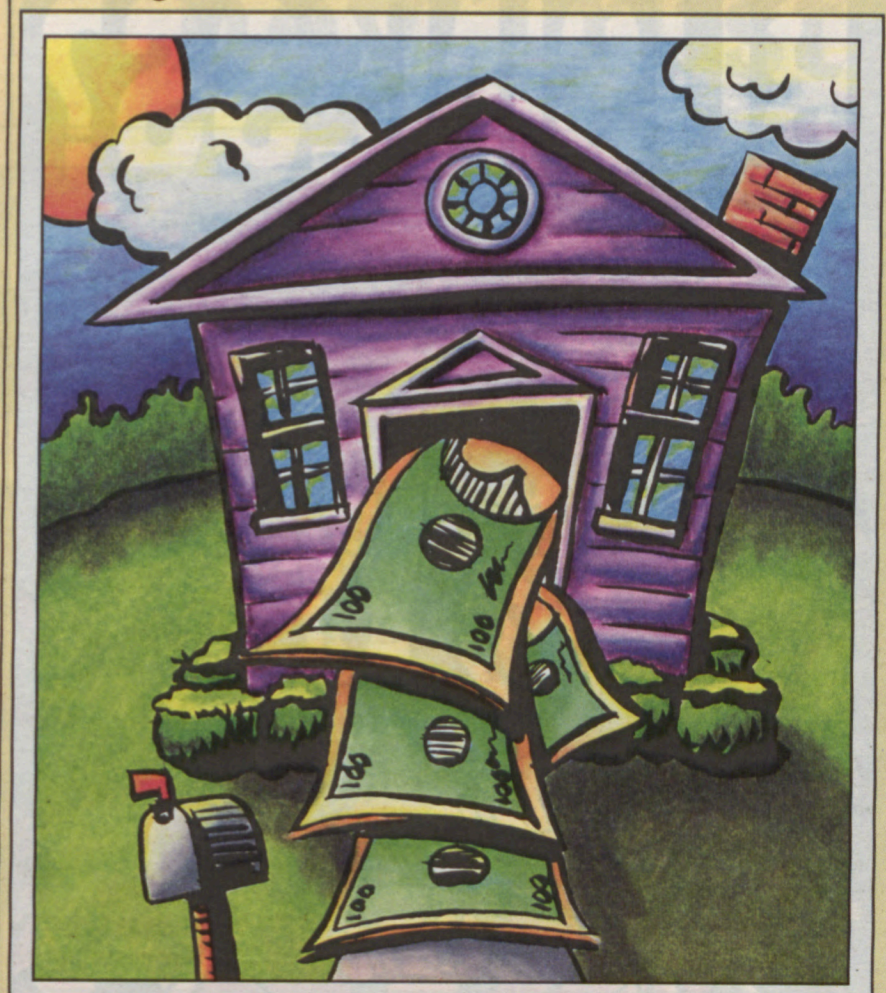
In a move to alleviate the shortage of bilingual education teachers in the Los Angeles school district, the Ford Foundation has awarded a three-year $1.2 million grant to the University of Southern California for a project to help Latino paraprofessionals become teachers ("It's Beautiful to Be Bilingual," May/June 1991).

The project will provide academic, financial, and social support for the parapros, and will include mentoring and preparation for the California credentialling exam. More than 500 parapros have already applied.

The project will be overseen by a consortium that includes the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA).

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Looking Forward? Try Reverse



Your house can be a major source of retirement income, if you choose a reverse equity mortgage. But there are a few things you need to keep in mind.

Reverse equity mortgages, which allow homeowners to convert the equity in their home into retirement income, have been around for a decade.

But few homeowners have been able to find such a loan, according to Ken Scholen, author of *Retirement Income on the House* (National Center for Home Equity Conversion Press, Marshall, Minn., 1992).

Now experts say that's beginning to change—and will continue to change rapidly throughout this decade.

That's good news for homeowners who plan to retire over the next several years. For the most part, these are people who are familiar with borrowing and using debt to enhance their lifestyle. A reverse mortgage will give them one more tool to help pay for retirement.

"The generation of people in their 60s today have dealt with mortgages all their adult lives," says Robert J. Sahadi, vice president at the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae), a government-sponsored agency that buys and packages mortgages for sale to institutional investors.

"They got V.A. loans after the war to buy their first house, and they refinanced to send their kids to college. Using a home mortgage to finance lifestyle changes is not a foreign concept to them."

Still, reverse equity loans are complex. Those who want to consider them as an option will need to do some boning up in advance and some comparison shopping once they're ready to use one.

A reverse mortgage allows the homeowner who has paid off—or nearly paid off—a mortgage to tap into that home equity by receiving regular monthly payments for life; regular payments for a specified term, such as 10 years; a lump sum payment; a line of credit; or some combination of these.

Taking out a reverse mortgage doesn't mean you're selling your house. The house still belongs to you. You need never make payments on the loan while you remain in the house.

You don't need to earn a certain income to quality for a reverse mortgage. Nor can the lender foreclose on the loan and take your house.

Taking a reverse mortgage does mean that you won't leave your home to your heirs. The loan becomes due when the homeowner dies or otherwise permanently vacates the house.

Here's how a reverse mortgage offered by Capital Holding Corporation of Louisville, Kentucky—the largest conventional lender in the market—works. You or your estate must pay the lesser of three amounts: the actual loan balance plus interest, the actual selling price of the home, or the market value of the home.

Because getting a reverse mortgage involves taking out a loan against a home that is debt-free, many homeowners considering them have to deal with strong psychological and emotional baggage.

In fact, the strength of your feelings about staying in your home and about going into debt may well be the deciding factor in whether a reverse mortgage makes sense for you.

Scholen said his research turned up two distinct views on reverse loans. One was something of a Depression-era mindset that shunned any form of debt. For example, one man told him. "If you can't afford your house, you should move."

Because financial planners have had so little opportunity to work with reverse mortgages, they tend to agree.

"If you have a $300,000 house and you need to borrow $200,000, maybe you'd be better off to just sell it and get a $100,000 house," says one.

But homeowners must weigh this view against how they would feel about being uprooted. Sholen's research found that retired people—especially women—often felt that their emotional ties to the house and the satisfaction it brought them justified the loan.

The market for reverse mortgages began to open up in July 1989 when the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) put a federal guarantee behind 2,500 reverse mortgages to homeowners who were at least 62 years old.

Fannie Mae quickly got involved, setting up guidelines for the loans that would make them acceptable to institutional investors who would buy them in the secondary market. This was a critical development: a lender who makes a reverse mortgage can now sell it and use the money to make new loans.

In May 1991, the FHA program was expanded to 25,000 loans. That's a small number, considering there were 31.6 million Americans over 65 in 1990, and 75 percent own their own homes, according to Fannie Mae. The maximum amount that can be borrowed on an FHA loan is low, too, ranging from $67,500 to $124,876, depending on the region of the country.

But Fannie Mae is currently working on guidelines for conventional mortgages that would be offered without government guarantees.

The guidelines, which are expected to be out sometime this year, will open up the reverse mortgage market, Sahadi says.

"For a decade, people have been trying to figure out how to do a reverse mortgage. No one was sure how to price it because there was no data base," he continues. "Now we're developing one."

Here are some things to weigh when considering a reverse mortgage:

▶ Upfront fees are stiff. Capital Holding charges a flat fee of $3,000 plus 7 percent of the appraised value of the house. For a $150,000 home, that would amount to $10,500, which is added to the loan balance. Homeowners who are extremely ill or who don't expect to be in the home for more than two or three years would not be well served.

▶ Monthly income is based on life expectancy. In general, younger homeowners won't receive enough income to make the plan worth their while. For example, a 65-year-old with $100,000 in equity might receive $234 a month on the FHA loan. An 85-year-old with the same house will receive $604. This argues for planning your retirement income so that you will consume other assets first, leaving the equity in your home as long as possible.

▶ As the loans become more widely available, marginal players will enter the market. The FHA guarantees that the income will be paid on its loans even if the lender defaults. That will not be true of many other loans. You'll need to be cautious.

The life expectancy tables used by the lender are crucial to the income you will receive. For example, the FHA program assumes that a 75-year-old woman will live another 25 years, to age 100. On that basis, a $100,000 home would yield an income of $350 for life.

But Capital Holding assumes the same woman has a life expectancy of 87.5 years. Under its program, she would receive $450 a month for the same house. That's a difference worth checking into before you make a decision.

—Mary Rowland

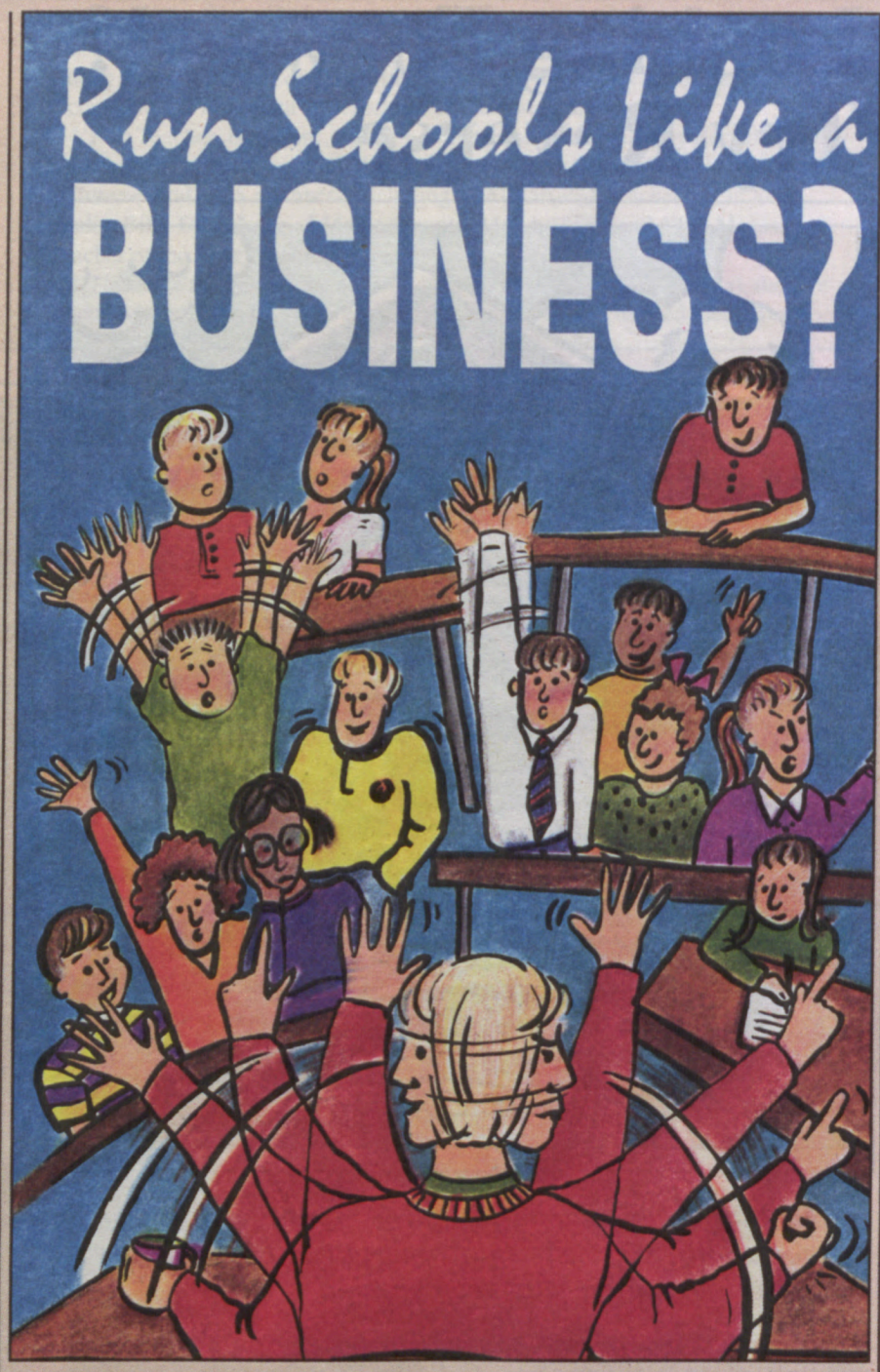
Reverse Mortgages, Home Equity Loans: —What's the Difference?

	Home Equity Loan	Reverse Mortgage
Do you need a certain level of income to qualify for the loan?	Yes	No. But you must be an elderly homeowner.
Do you have to pay back the loan every month?	Yes	No. No repayment is required for a long as you live in your home.
Can you lose your home if you do not pay back every month?	Yes	No. No repayment is required until you die, sell your home, or permanently move away.
Does the lender also have a claim on your income and non-home assets?	Yes	No. The lender only has a claim on your home equity.
Can the loan be paid to you in just about any way you choose?	No	Yes. The FHA program offers a single lump sum, a line of credit, a monthly advance, or any combination of these plans. You may also change your payment plan at any time.

Source: National Center for Home Equity Conversion

SOUNDING BOARD

Run Schools like a BUSINESS?



A 25-year Baltimore math teacher advocates that schools be run like a good business.

By Mozella Ritter

Of course. Like a good business. Not like the typical American business that's losing to international competition.

Here at my "smokestack factory" of a school, I dream of working in a businesslike school—one that takes teachers and students off the assembly line and puts them into small teams that produce results, just as many restructured businesses have learned to do.

Unfortunately the business advice we usually get calls for us to be more like the tottering giants of American mismanagement: "Do more with less." "Minimum input, maximum output." "Measure performance, punish failure, reward success." "Short-term gain over long-term quality."

Advocates of businesslike schools typically ignore a teacher's commonsense notion that school reform starts with smaller classes and fewer class periods per teacher.

This idea would give students the personal attention they need and teachers the time they need to follow up on students and work together as a faculty.

Business leaders and politicians are generally unwilling to face the high cost of eliminating crowd-control pedagogy and assembly-line learning. They seem determined, instead, to impose their own bureaucratic fixes in the name of a "results-oriented" accountability scheme where everyone must justify oneself in a paperwork nightmare.

Their faith in test scores—and punitive incentives to raise them—borders on the naive. Certainly they show little sympathy for a view heard in faculty rooms: "Put teachers in charge and get out of the way."

That view, interestingly, was advanced by Rockwell International in an ad in *The Atlantic* magazine's September issue. Here are some excerpts:

> *Most teachers must work to the clock, use textbooks adopted by a remote bureaucracy, submit lesson plans for administrative approval, and employ tests and measures imposed by a third party.*
>
> *Other professionals—lawyers, doctors, architects, accountants, clergy—work for themselves. Hospitals and law firms, accounting partnerships and architectural firms employ administrators to do the partners' or senior staff's bidding, not the other way around.*
>
> *Few teachers have access to the simple things other professionals take for granted: a telephone, for example, or a decent faculty lounge where they can have a cup of coffee and share notes with colleagues.*
>
> *Teachers are limited in their choice of opportunities for professional growth and renewal, something most professionals expect routinely. Most important, teachers are not in charge of their professional lives.*
>
> *Using a 'scientific' approach to management, schools were long ago 'teacher-proofed': designed in the hope that they would run whether or not the teachers were any good, echoing similar practices on the nation's assembly lines.*
>
> *The assembly line, it must be remembered, was a triumph of the 'dumbing down' of work, making it routine enough for unskilled workers to do.*
>
> *What about the high-tech assembly line? In the most modern manu-facturing firms, of course, the routinized work has been so 'dumbed down' that robots perform it (and do a better job, because they never get bored or distracted), while the human beings on the line do what they're good at: troubleshooting and problem-solving.*
>
> *What is the lesson for schools? At least as a trial, we should begin an experiment: teacher-run schools."*

Too bad more business leaders and politicians don't feel that way. The malaise of American management is deep-seated, according to W. Edwards Deming, grandfather of the "quality movement"—the consultant who taught Japanese industrialists in 1950 how to transform their management practices and challenge the world. His analysis demonstrates what's wrong with the quality-by-the-numbers reforms now being imposed on schools by politicians and American business leaders*:

> *It is a mistake to suppose that if you cannot measure the results of an activity, you cannot manage it. The fact is that the most important losses and gains cannot be measured; yet for survival they must be managed."*

A successful businesslike approach to school reform will be systematic, not piecemeal, fad-based, or blame-ridden.

In *Deming Management at Work*, author Mary Walton describes Deming's view of system improvement:

> *Everybody works within a system, governed by conditions over which the individual has no control.*
>
> *In the American style of management, when something goes wrong, the response is to look around for someone to blame or punish or to search for something to 'fix' rather than to look to the system as a whole for improvement.*
>
> *The 85-15 Rule holds that 85 percent of what goes wrong is with the system, and only 15 percent with the individual person or thing. In this connection, we do well to remember that in any group of people, not all, nor even the majority, can be above average. In fact, exactly half will be below average.*

But if the quality movement, begun by Deming and demonstrated by successful businesses, means anything, it cries out for three basic, commonsense changes in public education:

► Staffing levels that support personal attention for every student every day. And staffing levels that enable teachers to collaborate during the school day, follow up on individual students, and develop the academic program as a responsible faculty.

► A working environment for teachers and students that fosters an academic community able to break the current barriers to higher standards imposed by crowd-control pedagogy and bureaucratic management.

► A long-term, fully funded commitment to quality, not based on short-term results or economic conditions, that can capitalize on student strengths and meet student needs regardless of background.

That's my idea of a "businesslike" school. It will require our Association to restructure into faculty units that can handle new forms of representation and governance at each school (as outlined in a recent training package from the Maryland State Teachers Association). In fact, I believe these faculty chapters will have to jump-start the process if it's to get off the ground.

Meanwhile, the bell is ringing, and I have to monitor the hallway for student safety. Sometimes I feel like a prison guard.

Run schools like a business? You bet.

**Deming Management at Work* by Mary Walton. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1990.

Mozella Ritter teaches math at Hampstead Middle School in Baltimore.

INTERNATIONAL

In Words, They Trust

UNICEF

What's a kid's life like without a school? a home? a name? Despite a wealth of words calling for children's rights, too many youngsters around the world know the answers to these questions firsthand.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child's basic needs and the responsibilities of adults—including governments—to children and their families.

The document makes its case in 54 formally worded articles. But the concepts they convey are vivid, the blood and bone of healthy childhood. Specifically, the Convention covers:

- ► The right to what's needed for survival: food, shelter, clean water, and primary health care.
- ► The right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to special protection in time of war.
- ► The right to grow up in a safe environment, with formal education, constructive play, needed health care, and the opportunity to participate in the social, religious, and political life of the culture—free from discrimination.

The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in November 1989. Thus far, 107 countries have ratified the document.

Our country is not among them. Not only has the United States not ratified the Convention, but President Bush has not taken the first step of signing it. Among industrialized nations, only South Africa shares our position. Other nonsignatories include Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Ethiopia.

What's the problem? Some Bush Administration officials complain that the convention doesn't ban abortion. Others object to its ban on capital punishment for anyone under 18, permitted in some states.

In classrooms across the country, youngsters are looking at the UN documents outlining their rights. And they're learning just what those rights mean in their own lives.

Los Angeles teacher Marc Pruyn says first graders can grasp the abstract concept of rights without much trouble—if it's presented in terms they can understand.

"They can connect rights with rules, which they know about," says Pruyn, this year teaching kindergarten, where he emphasizes appreciation of differences.

Pruyn usually starts out first graders with the 10 rights listed in the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child: the right to affection, food and health care, education, play, a name and nationality, special care if handicapped, special help in disasters, development of individual abilities, upbringing in a spirit of peace and brotherhood, and freedom from discrimination.

"The kids will act out a right," says Pruyn. "For example, for freedom from discrimination, a boy might want to jump rope, but the girls laugh at him."

The right to a peaceful upbringing is tougher to handle. Some of Pruyn's Salvadoran students have all-too-vivid memories of war.

After dramatizing rights, Pruyn's first graders make a list of rights they want: everything from "read when I want to," "dance," and "bubble gum" to "eat good food," and "go back to El Salvador and not have war."

Finally, each student chooses a right and draws a picture illustrating it. The drawings, along with a list of the rights, are put together to make a mural in the school hallway.

Teaching youngsters about their rights can be a delicate venture. "Tell them all children have the right to good food," notes Tucson, Arizona third grade teacher Anita Levkowitz, "and parents can get upset with you sometimes.

"Tell children they have the right to be safe," Levkowitz continues, "and you don't know what that's going to call up in their experience."

Still, says Levkowitz, "it's very important for them to know about their rights."

"Literature's a wonderful way to get kids to know about things," suggests Levkowitz. "Especially animal stories. Those aren't so close to their lives.

"We did a whole unit on Cinderella. We asked, is she treated fairly by the stepmother? She had the right not to do anybody else's work, the kids said, and she had the right to say so."

In the words of Defense for Children International, a group dedicated to teaching children's rights and securing support for the UN Convention, "The children's rights movement is meaningless without the participation and leadership of children and young people themselves."

But will their movement be successful without the participation and leadership of voting adults?

Students are learning to stand up for their own rights. By pushing for U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, NEA members can stand up beside them.

—Jane Power

The NEA Children's Bill of Rights

We, the People of the United States, in order to achieve a more perfect union, fulfill our moral obligations, further our founding ideals, and preserve the blessings of liberty, do hereby proclaim this Bill of Rights for Children.

I. No child in our land of abundance shall want for plentiful and nutritional food.

II. In a society as advanced as ours in medical science, no child shall be denied medical care.

III. Whereas security is essential to a child's healthy development, every child shall be guaranteed the basic security of a place to live.

IV. To ensure the fulfilled potential of the individual and the nation, every child shall have the right to a quality education.

V. The government, whose role is to protect and defend at all levels, shall safeguard every child from abuse, violence, and discrimination.

Class Actions

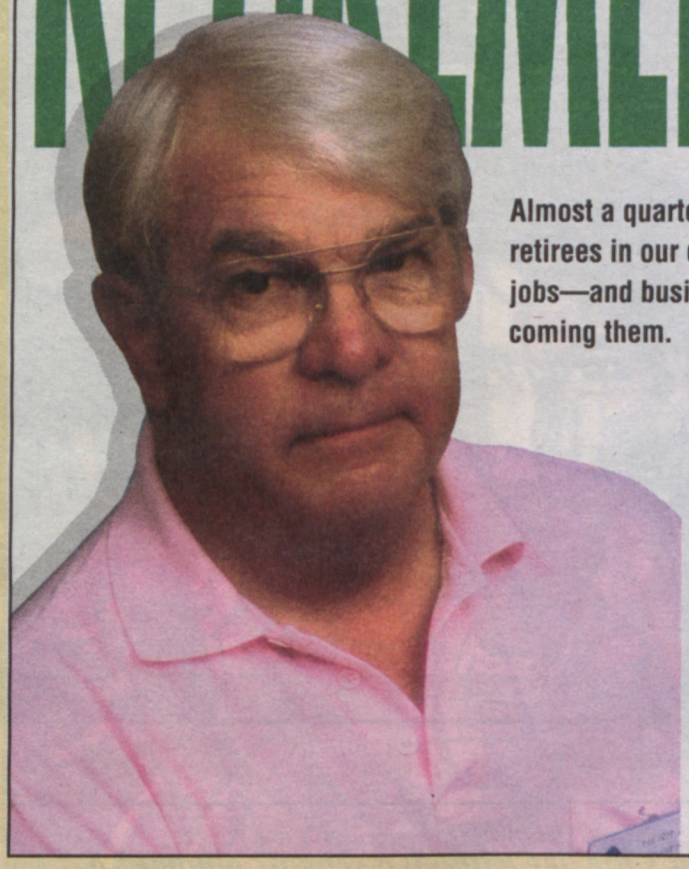
Defense for Children International-USA has produced several publications for classroom use. For ordering information, contact DCI-USA at 21 S. 13th St., Philadelphia, PA 19107. 215/569-8850.

- *In the Spirit of Peace: A Global Introduction to Children's Rights.*
- *In the Child's Best Interest: A Primer on the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.*
- *Children's Rights: Crisis and Challenge: A Global Report on the Situation of Children in View of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Impact on United States Law.*

LOOKING AHEAD TO RETIREMENT

WORK AFTER RETIREMENT

Almost a quarter of all the retirees in our country hold jobs—and business is welcoming them.



Joe Di Dio

NEA Board member Herb Smith retired five years ago; he's now well into a publishing and lecturing career.

Half of all retirees who reenter the job market do so because they need the money. The other half work for personal fulfillment.

Today's returning retirees are lucky. Business has never been more receptive to the return of older persons to the work force. One reason: The number of entry level workers is rapidly decreasing. By the year 2000, workers aged 16 to 34 will represent only 38 percent of the work force—down from 50 percent in 1985.

If you think you might want—or need—to go back to work after you retire, you should lay the groundwork before you actually retire. Start getting the credentials and making the contacts you'll need. After retirement, your situation will be much less flexible.

If you plan to turn a hobby into a money maker or buy a franchise or small business, note these statistics from the U.S. Small Business Administration: More than half of all small businesses shut down within five years. Many of these failures are due to poor planning or lack of funds.

To improve your odds of success with your own small business, NEA Board of Directors (Retired) member Herb Smith recommends that you start studying the market several years before you retire.

"Talk to people in that business," he says. "You need to predict where things are going and get there first."

Smith, who retired from teaching in 1987, turned his 11-year interest in photography into a publishing and lecturing career. Currently, he's working on a book about lupines, a wildflower.

Many retirees prefer activities that don't risk their savings. Among retirees with college degrees, paralegal work is popular: It's intellectually challenging, yet requires a relatively small investment of time and money, says the American Association of Paralegal Education (P.O. Box 40244, Overland Park, KS 66204). Real estate is another favorite field for many retirees.

Whatever field you choose, you should start attending training classes and making contacts at least five years before you retire to avoid a big initial drop in income.

If you're interested in temporary or part-time work, you might want to contact retail businesses and employment agencies.

NEA-Retired President Val Pullen notes that fast food chains like to hire former school employees because of their experience in working with children.

Fast food chains pay low wages but, as Pullen points out, retirees may not mind because of the Social Security earnings limit: In 1992, workers under age 65 who earn more than $7,440 a year will see their Social Security benefits reduced $1 for every $2 earned above the limit. Workers age 65 to 70 can earn up to $10,200 before their benefits are cut $1 for every $3 above the limit. Those over age 70 can earn as much as they want.

You may want to stick to the familiar and become a substitute teacher. If you choose this path, you'll need to consider professional liability insurance. One way to maintain your NEA liability coverage is to become a member of NEA-Retired before you retire. That way, when you retire, your coverage will continue with no interruption.

If you don't need extra income, or if you'll lose Social Security benefits by bringing home a paycheck, you might consider becoming a volunteer.

Your local NEA-Retired chapter can probably suggest a variety of places where your wisdom and skills are needed. NEA-R members can stay involved in the Association and education by promoting membership, campaigning for Association-backed legislation, and tutoring children and adults.

To NEA Board member Herb Smith, the word *retirement* is synonymous with *death*. "I haven't retired," says Smith, "I've just changed what I do."

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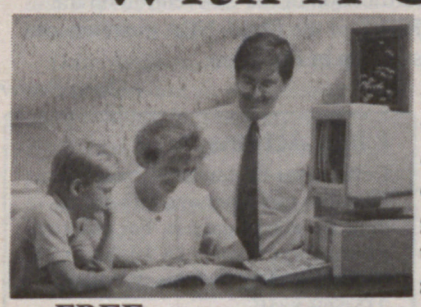

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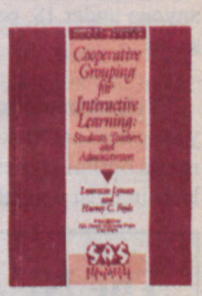

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RESEARCH CLUES

Learnfare Revisited

Does punishing the family by cutting the welfare check keep the teenager in school? A federally commissioned study of Learnfare says no, but some officials aren't so sure. Learnfare is the Wisconsin program initiated in 1988 to improve school attendance and reduce dropout among kids whose families are on welfare. Under the program, when teenagers miss school twice in one month without an excuse, their families' welfare checks are reduced.

The Learnfare study, conducted by the Employment and Training Institute (ETI) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, is believed to be the most comprehensive examination of a program linking welfare benefits to school attendance. A similar Learnfare-type project is underway in Ohio.

According to the study, after one year, one-third of the students involved in Learnfare had improved attendance, but more than half had poorer attendance. In each of the three years, the two largest districts showed dropout rates well above 20 percent.

In Milwaukee, for example, the number of teenagers with excessive absences (more than 20 days of school in one semester) continued to rise, reaching 30 percent in the fall semester, and over 40 percent in the spring.

For Milwaukee's class of 1991, the high school graduation rate for those involved with Learnfare was about 18 percent—the same as for the control group (those who formerly received welfare benefits but were not subject to Learnfare).

So has Learnfare failed? Wisconsin Secretary of Health and Social Services Gerald Whitburn says it's a matter of how you define success: "This report says that 36 percent of students sanctioned had a better attendance record a year later."

But Whitburn's not opposed to upping the ante. "This is a very deep problem, and disincentives to truancy may have to be stiffened in order to make them work."

Isabel Sawhill, a social policy analyst at the Urban Institute, says changing attitudes is most important. "It's not clear that adding a little more or less money to a welfare check is all by itself going to change high school students' motivation to attend school regularly."

TV's Influence: A Confirmation

A recent five-year study on television's influences on society conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA), has confirmed most educators' suspicions:

- Children, the elderly, ethnic minorities and women watch the most TV, especially when other activities aren't available.
- Children's poor viewing habits can lead to antisocial behavior, gender and racial stereotyping, and diminished academic performance.
- Television, as a medium, isn't inherently good or bad. In fact, psychologists recommend increases in quality programming, noncommercial funding, and educational uses for TV.

The APA report, *Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society*, was written by nine psychologists who make up the group's Task Force on Television and Society. Their goal: to determine TV's affect on vulnerable populations, specifically women, children, minorities, and the elderly.

Additional study findings:

- Entertainment and information are the two reasons given most often for viewing, even though many watch to relax and fill time.
- By devaluing and stereotyping social groups, TV creates or maintains prejudices and racism.
- Repeated exposure to violence can lead to increased acceptance of violence and can instigate antisocial values and behavior.
- Planned programming can be effective in teaching cognitive skills and social behavior as well as in disseminating nutrition and health messages.
- Children are intellectually active during viewing, so television can be used to increase or decrease mental effort and learning.

The task force recommends that television stations, to qualify for license renewal, be required to show that they're serving the needs of different population groups and that they're reducing advertising directed at children.

Copies of the publication are available for $25 (plus $3.50 p&h) from the University of Nebraska Press, 901 North 17th St., Lincoln, NE 68588, 800/755-1105.

Reform Poll: Americans Want More

Americans want fundamental reform of the public school system. The latest Louis Harris and Associates survey commissioned by *Agenda* magazine shows that Americans put education at the top of their list of political concerns.

Of 1,250 adults polled, 90 percent or more say they favor more involvement and interaction between parents, teachers, and principals; accountability at the individual school level; emphasis on learning rather than test-taking; and teacher competence in the subject area.

Over 70 percent say they believe technology, such as computers in the classroom, should receive a high priority in school reform. Over 60 percent say they want business to become involved in schools by furnishing mentors, providing equipment, and helping with funding. Major changes are needed in the present public education system to produce a more skilled labor force, according to 81 percent of the respondents.

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(Plan Year Beginning September 1, 1990)

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Premiums Collected:	$1,305,538
Benefits charged:	
Claims paid	$1,244,676
Claims charged	$1,217,652
Remainder of Premium:	
Retention charges (on accrual basis)	0
Other expenses	$61,692
Taxes	$26,194
Charges for risks or contingencies	0
Other retention charges	0
Total Retention	$87,886
Status of policyholder reserves at 8/31/91:	
Claim reserves	0
Other reserves	0
Dividends or retroactive rate refunds due	0

Plan Name: NEA LIFE INSURANCE

The Plan does not have any assets or liabilities, income or expenses. Participants' contributions are paid directly to The Prudential Insurance Company of America to cover the cost of providing insurance coverage and to pay administrative expenses. There were 345,160 participants. The following financial information has been furnished by The Prudential Insurance Company of America for the year beginning September 1, 1990 and ending August 31, 1991.

Premiums Collected:	$21,725,473
Benefits charged:	
Claims paid	$18,745,986
Claims charged	$18,810,999
Remainder of Premium:	
Retention charges (on accrual basis)	0
Other expenses	$1,846,344
Taxes	$377,836
Charges for risks or contingencies	0
Other retention charges	0
Total Retention	$2,224,180
Dividends or retroactive rate refunds	$3,443,349
Status of policyholder reserves at 8/31/91:	
Claim reserves	$18,411,467
Other reserves	0
Dividends or retroactive rate refunds due	0

Plan Name: NEA ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT

The Plan does not have any assets or liabilities, income or expenses. Participants' contributions are paid directly to The Prudential Insurance Company of America to cover the cost of providing insurance coverage and to pay administrative expenses. There were 118,642 participants. The following financial information has been furnished by The Prudential Insurance Company of America for the year beginning September 1, 1990 and ending August 31. 1991.

Premiums Collected:	$1,620,501
Benefits charged:	
Claims paid	$1,317,033
Claims charged	$1,566,590
Remainder of Premium:	
Retention charges (on accrual basis)	0
Other expenses	$246,334
Taxes	$28,177
Charges for risks or contingencies	0
Other retention charges	0
Total Retention	$274,511
Dividends or retroactive rate refunds	0
Status of policyholder reserves at 8/31/91:	
Claim reserves	0
Other reserves	0

Additional Information
Plan participants and beneficiaries may obtain copies of the more detailed 1990 Annual Reports for a reasonable charge. or they may inspect them without charge. To obtain copies. write to the Administrator asking for the 1990 Annual Report. The Administrator will state the charge for the specific document you request so you can find out the cost before ordering. The 1990 Annual Reports can be examined without charge at the Office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, c/o NEA Special Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington. D.C. 20036.

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Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn.

David S. Folland, M.D., practices pediatrics in Salt Lake City, Utah. A former president of the Utah chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Folland is associate clinical professor of pediatrics at the University of Utah College of Medicine.

Do children today eat nutritionally sound diets?
Most children today eat diets adequate in calories, basic vitamins, and nutrients. But too many kids eat foods with excess fat, salt, and refined sugar.

As a consequence, many children have dental cavities by the time they're teenagers. And, over the past two decades, obesity has increased from 18 to 27 percent among 6- to 11-year-olds, and 16 to 22 percent among teenagers.

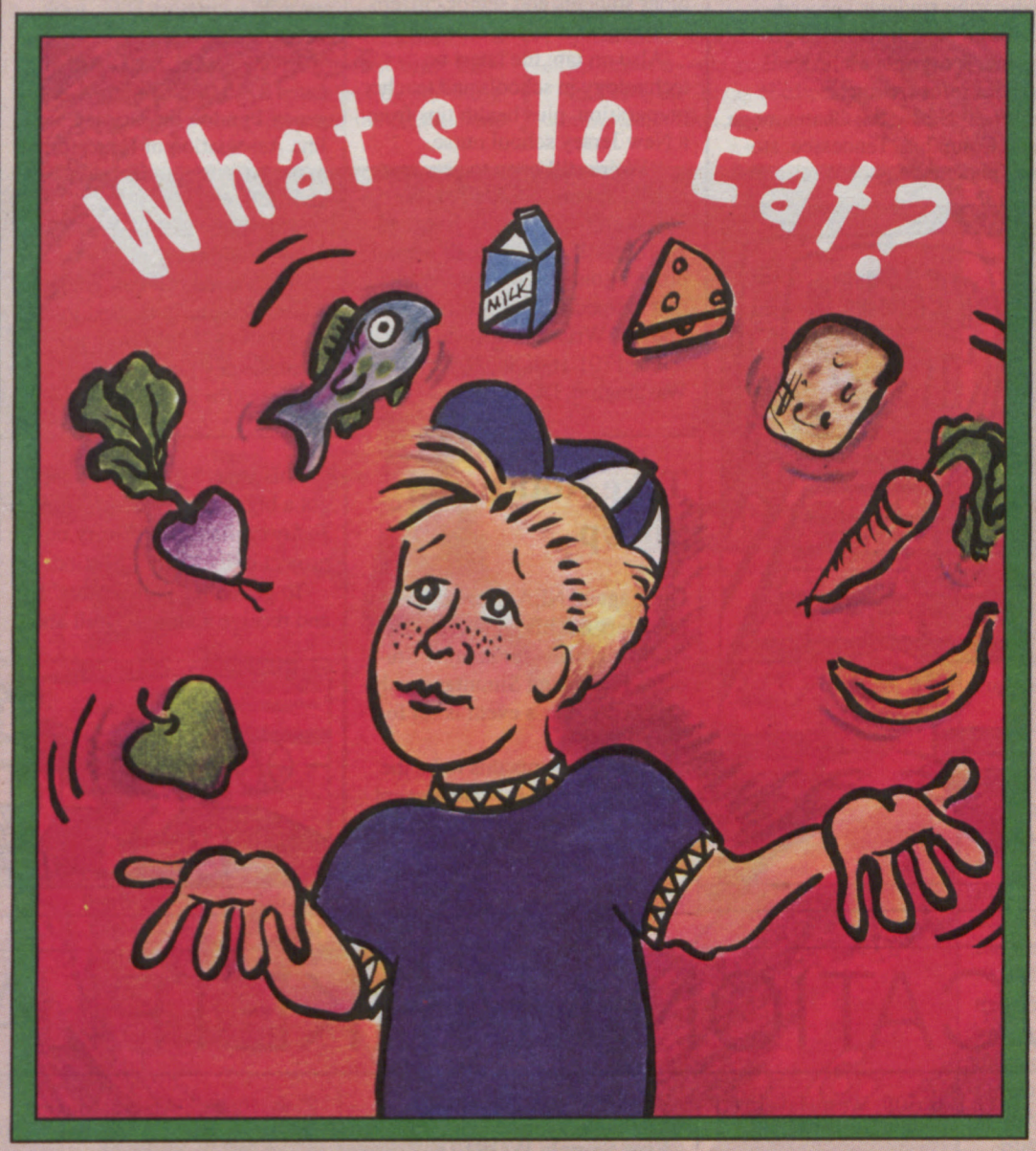
How important is nutrition to a child's ability to learn?
There are two issues here—hunger and nutrition. First, children can't concentrate, enjoy school, or truly learn if they're hungry. No child deserves that.

Second, it's well documented that kids need adequate nutrients for their cognitive development. Severe iron deficiencies, for example, can affect cognitive development two to three years later, even if the deficiency is corrected.

How will changing a child's diet lower the risk for illness or disease?
Many adult illnesses are nutrition-related. If we get kids to enjoy foods we know are healthy, they'll be able to carry those habits into adulthood and that will lower their risk of heart disease, cancer, and other illnesses.

What's your opinion about the Eating Right Pyramid, the USDA food chart recalled after protests from the meat and dairy industries?
All I can say is that dairy products, meat, and foods like potato chips top the list of foods with high fat levels. What we're trying to do is steer children toward a low-fat, high-fiber diet. Food charts are visual aids that can reinforce that message.

What does a good school lunch consist of?
A school lunch should provide one-fourth to one-third of a child's daily nutritional requirements.



A good, balanced lunch includes one cup of milk, two ounces of protein, a fruit, a vegetable, and two portions of starches (bread, for example).

What can schools do to help children eat healthier meals?
School cafeterias can offer alternatives to high-fat foods. They can bake instead of fry, offer turkey instead of ground beef, and make yogurt-based dips or dressings.

Should overweight children be put on a diet?
Restricted diets and strict fitness programs can become discouraging to kids over time. Most kids will benefit from an unstructured approach to eating low-fat foods and participating in fitness activities they enjoy.

But many obese children can benefit from a professionally supervised weight and fitness program that teaches nutrition and exercise in a group format.

What about teenagers' diets—how healthy are they?
I have three teenagers myself, so I know—they have terrible diets. It's hard to fight the influence of a society filled with fast foods, sugar-laden snacks, and unhealthy diets.

But we have to keep offering healthy alternatives and teaching about nutrition. Perhaps then we can change society's attitudes about nutrition.

How closely are nutrition and fitness intertwined?
Very closely. A child who participates in regular aerobic exercise not only burns more calories than a sedentary child, but burns those calories more efficiently.

Also, a child who exercises often has better control over appetite. And exercise builds self-esteem and a healthy attitude about an active life.

Parents and teachers should encourage children to participate in sports they're likely to enjoy. Mix activities to help children develop the five main components of physical fitness: aerobic fitness, body composition, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility.

What constitutes a healthy diet and exercise program?
A healthy diet consists of adequate calories, vitamins, and nutrients, with a proper balance of fats, proteins, and carbohydrates. This can be achieved with the traditional daily balanced diet of four portions of milk, four portions of fruits and vegetables, four grains or starch, and two portions of protein.

Exercise for young children should encourage daily active play. Individual and team sports can be introduced in the early school years. Teenagers need 30 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week, plus regular muscle strengthening and flexibility stretching to be fit.

What are good after-school fitness activities?
Young children should be encouraged to participate daily in outdoor play. This can include active games, bicycling, roller skating, and other unstructured activities. Older children may enjoy organized sports, dance, gymnastics, or any safe activity that's fun.

What can schools do to help students?
The most important thing parents and teachers can do is model optimum fitness and nutrition. What we do speaks much louder than what we say.

Start today with one small improvement in a child's diet or exercise habits. For example, encourage children to try one of these: eat only low-fat foods between meals, join a sports team, bicycle to a friend's house, or limit soda to one can per day.

Continue this faithfully for three weeks. Soon, the child will have developed a new healthful habit.

To paraphrase an old saying, "Nutrition and fitness by the yard are hard, but by the inch they're a cinch."

Looking for Help?

The American Cancer Society has developed "Changing the Course," a classroom curriculum and food service program to increase students' acceptance of low-fat foods at school, in the home, and in the community.

The program is currently being tested in four states—Florida, Connecticut, Oklahoma, and Mississippi.

For information on this program or for other materials on nutrition, contact your local Cancer Society office or call the American Cancer Society at 404-320-3333.

Food Service Hotline

Last year, Congress pledged $1 million to the National Food Service Management Institute at the University of Mississippi for two purposes. One is to help identify healthy foods kids actually like. The second is to teach adults how to prepare these kinds of food.

Among the Institute's first acts was the creation of a national information clearinghouse with a toll-free number for food service workers and managers. If you have a question, call 1/800-321-3054.

YOUR NEA

Teacher TV Set To Run For 13 Shows

Teacher TV is back. A joint effort of NEA and the Learning Channel, *Teacher TV* will hit the airwaves again on April 12, with a rerun of the one-hour pilot. Then on April 19 the first of 13 half-hour shows will air at 6 p.m. ET.

What's on tap this spring on *Teacher TV*? Here's a sampling of material that film crews have gathered from schools around the country.

From Falls Church (Virginia) High School comes a segment on how technology helps special education students succeed.

From Austin, Texas, a progress report on a multi-level school reform project.

From Nashville, Chattanooga, and Columbia, Tennessee, stories about the Space Week activities that NEA's state affiliate, the Tennessee Education Association, cosponsors with NASA each year.

Also, from Mesa, Arizona, a feature on a project involving older students and senior citizens working with young students.

Also on tap: the latest on technology in schools and teacher preparation, plus health tips from a New Jersey school nurse.

"We're still open to new material," explains NEA's *Teacher TV* coordinator, Barby Halstead-Worrell. "If you know of a great project going on or have an idea that's especially innovative, let us know." Write to Halstead-Worrell at 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Proceedings Available

If you're a Life member of NEA and want to know all the details about what went on at the 1991 NEA Representative Assembly, sit right down and write.

Clip the label from the front of *NEA Today* and send it with your request to NEA Membership Records, 1201 16th St., N. W., Washington, DC 20036.

NEA Board of Directors' Votes: Help for North Carolina

In February, the NEA Board of Directors, meeting at NEA Center in Washington, D.C., took two roll-call votes.

In one action, the Board allocated $150,000 from the Contingency Fund to the North Carolina Association of Educators to assist NCAE with its budget shortfall.

The vote was 144-Yes; 0-No; 8-Not Voting.

In a second roll-call vote, the Board defeated a motion to allocate up to $50,000 from the Contingency Fund to pay expenses for members of the Board of Directors to attend the NEA 1992 Pre-Convention Conferences.

The vote was 17-Yes; 133-No; 2-Not Voting.

Absent at the time of the votes were: Richard Blish (Kentucky), Barbara Gormick (Oregon), Ann Robertson (Tennessee), and Phyllis Mitchell (retired). The alternate for Mitchell was Otto Eachus.

The NEA Board of Directors meets at least four times a year. Its next meeting is set for May 1 at NEA Center, followed by a June 30 meeting at the RA.

Take Notice and Sit Up

Once again, NEA member Lenny Saunders has his hands full. He's finalizing plans for another Students Exercising Simultaneously Day. This year's event is set for May 13.

Saunders wants this to be the best-ever Day. Last year's event drew 5 million kids exercising in all 50 states and 40 different countries.

This year, Saunders' project got a big publicity boost. *USA Today* carried a brief story on the project in its "Life" Section.

To get on the participants' list and receive a kit telling all about how you can join Lenny and friends, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Lenny Saunders, Valley View Elementary School, Montville, NJ 07045.

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NEW WAVE

Learning By Laser

Are videodisks the textbook of the future? In Texas, the answer's already played out.

In her third grade classroom, science teacher Laurel New is going over a lesson about simple machines. After a few minutes' discussion, she sets a laserdisk in a player. On the classroom TV screen, a series of circus acts unfolds.

"Pretty soon, my students are calling out the names of machines they see in motion—pulleys, cranks, winches," explains New. "For the first time, they understand these machines by watching them at work—they see the relationship to something they know, rather than something they have to imagine."

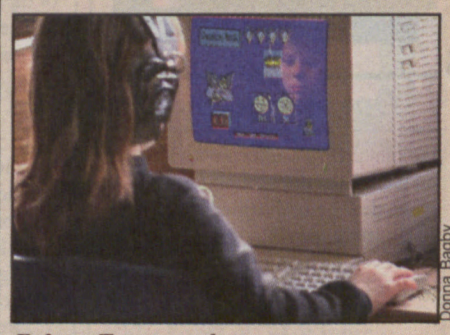
For Laurel New and her colleagues at Bel Air Elementary School in Euless, Texas, that same lesson might not have been as effective without the videodisk, a 12-inch platter filled with moving images linked to science lessons.

Videodisks supplement—or in some cases replace—the science textbook.

In 1990, the Texas textbook adoption committee, which approves all textbook purchases, recommended an elementary science curriculum on disk rather than a textbook. It was the first time instructional technology competed for adoption.

That curriculum, "Windows on Science" (distributed by the Optical Data Corporation), is now being used in more than 2,600 elementary schools across the state. Geared for grades one through six, the program includes 11 videodisks accompanied by learner guides, student activities, and readers.

Other companies offer videodisks as a supplement to textbooks. Silver Burdett Publishers, for example, produces the science textbook and videodisk supplement used at Bel Air Elementary.



Donna Bagby

Euless, Texas, students use computers and videodisks to get the most out of their classroom time. The disks often supplement regular textbooks.

Visual learners are especially drawn to videodisk instruction, says Deborah Cottle, a fourth grade teacher at Bel Air.

"I'm able to give my students a visual image to explain a piece of technology or scientific theory," says Cottle. "What's more, my students are able to see real scientists at work—and I can slow down the action."

Videodisk technology also gives a teacher more flexibility than conventional videotape or filmstrip. The teacher can interact with students more readily while playing the disk and can pinpoint exact moments on the disk, adds Cottle.

But third grade teacher Laurel New cautions that reading must remain part of the classwork.

"I don't think it's a good idea to use the disk without the textbooks," says New. She was serving on the local textbook adoption committee when it voted to use a combination of textbook and videodisk.

"Our chief concern was accessibility," New explains. "At Bel Air we have only two players. That's not enough.

"There's also a real problem for kids who miss a lesson," New continues. "They can't easily review the lesson, and there isn't a textbook to take home."

Other educators say the videodisks are the wave of the future.

"We felt that having the latest technology was going to provide our students with the best way to learn science," says Jan Zimmern, a fourth grade teacher at Anderson Mill Elementary School in Round Rock, Texas. Her school uses the Optidata package.

"The key is still the teacher," notes Zimmern. "Whether it's textbooks or videodisks, they're only as good as the person who uses them."

—Anita Merina

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Letters

One Step Farther

I applaud Dr. Potolicchio's views on the role of the school nurse when dealing with epilepsy ("Understanding Epilepsy," Feb.). However, he didn't go far enough with his information.

A critical aspect of the school nurse's role is education. It is the school nurse who educates the teachers, the paraprofessional staff, the other students. It is the school nurse who allays fears and gives accurate information when it comes to any health topic—epilepsy included.

Otherwise, thank you for the informative article. I'd like to see more school nurse views in your Health column. Public schools have nurses. Not many have physicians.

Christine Blauvelt, R.N.
Portland, Maine

I was very impressed with the article "Understanding Epilepsy." As a teacher in training, I found it very informative. I know in the future I will come into contact with many disorders and diseases, and epilepsy will probably be one of them.

Now that I have read this article and have some basic education about the disorder, I will be able to recognize the symptoms and administer help and understanding to those around me.

Karen Cox
Clinton, Indiana

Firing Blanks

Whoever wrote the February "Heroes and Zeroes" column misfired. The writer accuses Bush of Doublespeak in saying that any school that serves the public and is held accountable by the public authority provides public education.

Bush, or his speechwriter, is right on the mark, and the columnist is wrong. Schools operated by the state and local government, which we conventionally call "public schools" are not the only schools that provide a public education.

That is the basis of the landmark decision of *Pierce vs. Society of Sisters* in which the Supreme Court denied the right of Oregon to force parents to send their children to state schools.

So what's a "private school" now? A school not operated by the government that nonetheless meets the needs of the public.

John Schuh
APO New York

Frog Dissection Debate: Readers Take Sides

My respect goes to David Bates ("Should Students Dissect Frogs?" Feb.) for his futuristic views.

I wholeheartedly agree that dissection of animals for junior high and high school science classes is unnecessary and irrelevant to all of the issues that future generations will be dealing with in our increasingly deteriorating natural environment. It is of utmost importance that students be taught to become aware of the problems and their solutions.

The future belongs to those whom we teach. Let us teach them well!

Linda G. Sauer
Athens, Ohio

I could readily identify with *both* teachers' positions concerning dissections in the classroom/laboratory. I am a retired high school biology teacher, having taught (and dissected) for over 30 years.

For sake of argument, the views are presented as "mutually exclusive," but I wonder how many younger readers are convinced one way is "right" professionally and the other is "wrong"? Why can't we accept these so-called controversial issues as differences of professional judgment and allow each professional to adopt the program of choice without battering?

I think we must all resist efforts to "nationalize" curricula to the point where professional teachers have little choice for expressing their varied interests and methods for inspiring students to learn.

I'm sure, frog dissection aside, both of these teachers excel in the fundamental purpose of education—getting students to learn!

James W. Roberto
Ravenna, Ohio

I must take exception to Sally Hillstrom Chamber's "bang for the buck" attitude toward dissection. Leaving aside David Bates' arguments against wasting animal resources and class time that could be spent on better pursuits, I feel it is important to keep in mind that "dissection" is the systematic dismemberment of a once-living creature slaughtered for that purpose.

Practiced anywhere outside a laboratory, it would be regarded as malicious, sadistic, or perverse. Yet we reward our children for willingly participating in such a procedure.

And when we encourage reluctant students to participate in or passively watch a process that makes them uncomfortable, aren't we teaching them that their feelings, values, and instincts should be ignored? What do we expect their reaction to be the next time they're confronted with a situation they feel is morally or ethically wrong?

Please don't misunderstand; I'm not a fanatic. I'm a secondary education student who switched my major from biotechnology because I was sickened by the lack of ethical debate and compassion in the laboratory.

Judy Whitman
Harrison, Michigan

As a teacher and an animal rights advocate, I certainly am happy to see that there are compassionate, enlightened teachers of science like Mr. Bates, who have abandoned archaic and inhumane curriculum.

Instead of dissecting frogs, Mr. Bates has used an enormous amount of creative ability to broaden his curriculum to include very relevant topics that his students can impact on during their lifetimes. His curriculum revolves around topics that need to be dealt with because the earth's environment is stressed to the maximum. His students should certainly be informed voters and stewards of natural resources.

We can all learn a great deal from Mr. Bates about teaching science.

N. Jean Smith
Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania

I lean toward David Bates' reasoning philosophically, but I finally agree with Sally Hillstrom Chambers. That is because I remember my own awe and surprise when I took over frog dissection from a clumsy partner in high school.

No chart, model, film, or computer simulation can approach the incredible neatness of real organs arranged inside real skin. Maybe some frogs die for "nothing," but I owe a debt of gratitude to the one who taught me what living things are like inside.

Janice Rayner
Dudley, Massachusetts

Well, Well

The article "Wellness at Work" (Feb.) was of particular interest to me. I am a former teacher who has been involved in wellness for the past seven years. Your article mentioned two districts in Minnesota and Maryland that have actively implemented wellness programs for their staff.

I want to bring to your attention to what the state of Michigan has offered to public school districts to inaugurate or continue wellness programs. The Michigan Health Initiative was a state program that allocated grant funds to both public and private sectors to conduct wellness programs for their employees.

From 1989 through 1991, many school districts took advantage of this opportunity to either initiate or carry forward activities that assisted employees to make lifestyle behavior changes.

Very often states are cited for reduction of funds and services. In this case, Michigan was very proactive in enabling budget constrained districts to offer programs that assist employees to improve their health and to contain health care costs in the long run.

For further information about this outstanding program, contact the Office of Health Promotion at the Michigan Department of Public Health in Lansing.

Joan Sheridan
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Students, teachers, and parents in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, have been walking for several years.

Robert Swertgel, who walked the 50 states in one year, has indelibly changed the lives of many in this community.

We love to walk to be well!

Rita Janda
Teacher of 26 "well" students
Green Bay, Wisconsin

A Reason To Be Tired

The Trends column (Feb.) described how the Brandon, South Dakota, school board, supported by most of the teachers, created a policy that outlaws falling asleep in class.

I am a teacher of special and regular education, a parent of teenagers, and an advocate for people with narcolepsy and other sleep disorders. As a student, I fell asleep during many high school classes until doctors identified and treated the medical cause. Detention, suspension, and even expulsion would not have cured my narcolepsy.

I urge educators to become informed about sleep and the toll of daytime sleepiness and sleep disorders on society. Then, share that information with your students.

For information, write to William C. Dement, M.D., Ph.D., Chairman, National Commission, Sleep Disorders Research, Stanford University School of Medicine, 300 Pasteur Dr., Stanford, CA 94305.

Marilyn Young
McMinnville, Oregon

Debate

Is the School Year Too Short?

YES

Tom McCoy, a media specialist at Nicollet Junior High in Burnsville, Minnesota, is a 25-year teaching veteran. He was Burnsville's 1989 Teacher of the Year. Over the years, McCoy has served as president, chief negotiator, and newsletter editor for the Burnsville Education Association.

Our school year is an artifact of simpler times.

When our nation was agricultural, families needed help with their summer farm work. It made sense then to suspend school during the summer so children could stay home and help.

But today education must coexist with technology, global competition, increasing social problems, and a tremendously expanding knowledge base—and we're locked into a school year that doesn't serve these needs.

Proponents of the 180-day school year say teachers and students need a break. Well, who doesn't? Most folks get much less time to recharge themselves than do students and teachers.

By persisting in the pattern we now have, we admit to the world that education isn't as important as endeavors that continue year round.

Churches don't close their doors in the summer. Hardware stores stay open all year. The start-stop-start mentality of the school year postpones true improvement of the system because it enables lots of teachers and students to "endure" until summer. If we all knew we were in for the long haul, we might get serious about school reform.

Proponents of the current school calendar say kids should spend time with their families during the summer. I say: What time? What families?

Today's parents and children spend very little time together under the best of circumstances. In fact, studies reveal that parents and children spend almost no time in meaningful dialogue, whether school is in session or not.

If there are two parents at home, most likely both hold jobs. Often there's only one parent—typically a harried, overworked mother trying to hold things together.

A very few lucky kids spend summers with their parents doing fun and worthwhile activities that add to their development. Are we making national education policy for those few?

What happens to the rest of the kids during the long, hot, unproductive summer? Are they dreaming dreams, fishing, reading, using their imaginations? No, they're watching low-quality TV, playing video games, running in the streets, wasting time, forgetting what they learned in school, and—all too often—taking care of themselves.

School isn't perfect, but we do better than that.

The most discouraging reason for a longer school year is that—try as we may—we're unable to bring our students up to world standards. The only choice we have is to try to improve education 20 percent by adding 20 percent to the time we spend in the classroom.

You say we're already doing things that will turn education around? That national attention is focused on the problem? That business wants to help? That political leaders are becoming more aware? That we're getting computers and special programs and outcome-based education and parent involvement and site-based management?

Well, all these things are nice. They represent progress. But when will they make our students do as well in math as Swedish kids? When will they make most, if not all, kids graduate from high school? When will a diploma mean that you can speak, spell, and write your mother tongue—and perhaps another language—as, say, Irish kids can?

Will it be when I'm an old man? When my son is an old man? Will the rest of the world stand still while we make hopelessly slow improvements?

We can have a 20 percent improvement next year by extending the school year by 20 percent. It will cost more. We won't want to pay for it. Nobody will like it. Students and school staff will have to make big changes.

But the alternative is to struggle along, falling behind and waiting for the next headline about low math scores or the next study analyzing the sorry state of education in our country.

If we want our nation to be on the move, doing great things, we have to devote more time to preparing our next generation to create such a society and to participate in it.

NO

Lorna Hockett, a fifth grade teacher at Waldport (Oregon) Elementary School, has taught for 14 years. She's treasurer of the Lincoln County Education Association and a certified trainer in drug and alcohol abuse prevention and personal development programs.

Despite popular opinion, today's classrooms are very different from what they were 20, or even 10, years ago. I've never met a teacher who wasn't constantly seeking to grow and improve. The current public rhetoric for restructuring the schools merely gives validity to what teachers want.

But would lengthening the school year improve education? Like any proposal involving major change, the concept deserves calm consideration. In weighing the pros and cons, we must ask some questions.

What would be the benefits? A frequent answer is that more time in the classroom would produce more student learning. I challenge that.

True, many private corporations have found that running their computers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, allows them to process more data. But we work with human beings, not computers.

Humans need time to do things other than process information. They must eat, sleep, integrate skills, and use parts of their bodies other than the brain. Increasing school time would decrease time available for individual development.

Recently, corporations like Nike and Saturn have come to recognize that increased work time doesn't automatically improve production or quality. These corporations understand the value of providing for all employee needs by offering on-site programs for physical fitness, medical care, child day care, and recreation.

Many developmental needs of children can't—and shouldn't—be met in school. For example, learning to perceive oneself as capable, influential, and significant isn't possible in a classroom with 20 or 30 other children the same age. Kids need time to experience the real world, where people typically work in small multiaged groups.

Would an increased school year yield any negative results? From a practical standpoint alone, costs would increase, adding to our school funding crisis. Cutting programs or increasing class size to compensate for this extra cost would cancel any benefits.

We're still feeling the negative effects of class size increases that took place when the baby boomers entered school. Teachers with classes of 30 or more students spend most of their day dealing with paperwork. They have little time or energy left to give youngsters the individual attention they need. Let's not make it worse.

Most likely, a longer school year would also mean increased student stress. Japanese studies show that the level of student stress relates directly to the student suicide rate.

Can projected benefits be realized in another way? If we're adding days to the school calendar to allow more time for learning, it would be prudent to look at how we're using time now. In many districts—mine included—we devote about 10 days a year to achievement testing.

I challenge this use of time. There are more convincing ways to let the public know we're doing our job and more valid ways of assessing student growth. In fact, many students—and parents, too—develop fears about schools and their own worth based on the results of these tests.

The proposal for a longer school year raises other issues, too. Will teachers have the time for professional development and growth? Will students who have to work to help support themselves and their families be forced out of the system?

How will student enrichment and extension programs—athletic and academic camps, foreign student exchanges, and extended field trips, including family vacations—fit into the picture?

We must also keep in mind certain basics, like a child's attention span; assimilation rate; need for self-initiated learning; and physical, vocational, and social or emotional needs.

Sure, the current school year was created for a rural, agrarian economy. But before we discard this system in the name of progress and a "more is better" philosophy, we should carefully consider who it is that we serve and how the change would affect those persons.

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